CHRISTIANITY OR AGNOSTICISM?

Nihil Obstat—

SYDNEY F. SMITH, S.J.,

CENSOR DEPUTATUS.

Imprimatur—

HERBERTUS CARDINALIS VAUGHAN,

ARCHIEPISCOPUS WESTMONASTERIENSIS.

CHRISTIANITY OR AGNOSTICISM?

BY

THE ABBÉ LOUIS PICARD.

AUTHORISED TRANSLATION REVISED BY THE

REV. J. G. MACLEOD, S.J.

LONDON:

SANDS & CO.

MDCCCXCIX.

BR121
.P53
1899x
239
P586

"No man hath seen God at any time: the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him."—St. John i. 18.

AUTHOR'S DEDICATION.

TO HIS EMINENCE

THE MOST REVEREND MONSIGNOR COULLIE,

CARDINAL ARCHBISHOP OF LYONS AND VIENNE,
AND PRIMATE OF GAUL.

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED WITH THE AUTHOR'S PROFOUND AND FILIAL RESPECT AND HOMAGE.

NOV 23 '28

2459

CONTENTS.

PAGE

DEDICATION, - - - - - - - - - - - - vii

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE, - - - - - - - - - - xiii

LETTERS OF APPROBATION, - - - - - - - - - xv

AUTHOR'S PREFACE, - - - - - - - - - - - xix

PART I.

SPIRITUALISM OR THE SUPERNATURAL.

CHAPTER I.

THE SUPERNATURAL—Science and the great human problems—The origin of the world—Science and the Bible—The origin of Life—Evolution, or the theory of transformism—Evolution and the human body—Evolution and the human soul. Conclusion—Powerlessness of science to offer a substitute for religion, - - 1

CHAPTER II.

THE SUPERNATURAL AND THE SUPREME EXPLANATION OF THINGS—Creation and the gifts of reason—Life, its harmonies and its laws—The transcendence of man in the animal kingdom—God, and the proofs of His existence—Objection from the existence of evil. Conclusion—Reason and faith, - - - - - - 66

CHAPTER III.

THE TRUE GOD—The personal God and His attributes—The portrait of God sketched for us in the Bible—God's providence; miracle and prayer. Conclusion—Theism and revelation, - - - 120

CHAPTER IV.

THE SOUL—Kant's postulates; duty, liberty, and immortality—The spirituality of the soul; force and thought—The interior sense; personality and conscience—Liberty; the will—Immortality; human destiny, the great beyond. Conclusion—The postulates of Kant; moral independence. Religion, - - - - - 144

CHAPTER V.

PAGE

The Adversaries of The Supernatural.—Agnosticism or scepticism — Posivitism — Pantheism — Atheism and materialism. Conclusion, - - - - - - - - - - - - 186

PART II.

CHRISTIANITY.

CHAPTER I.

Jesus and His Religion—The Man-God—The Messianic conscience of Jesus — His intellectual and moral transcendence — His miracles—The prophecies—Christian morality. Objections—Christian passivity; the division among spirits—The work of Jesus—Miraculous spread of Christianity—Persecution—Transformation of the pagan world—Inability of rationalism to account for it. Conclusion, - - - - - - - - - 229

CHAPTER II.

The Authenticity of the New Testament—The witnesses from without—Quotations from authors and documents of the first centuries concerning the books of the New Testament—The New Testament books, taken as a whole, are in perfect harmony, and present an united testimony—Internal criticism; the Gospels prove their own authenticity—The harmony of the Gospels—Their integrity, - - - - - - - - - - 299

CHAPTER III.

The Interpretations of the Gospel—Strauss's theory; "The Myths of the Christian Legend"—"The impostures of Jesus and the Apostles." Renan's theory; electic exegeses—Truth of the Gospel miracles. Examples, - - - - - - - - 350

CHAPTER IV.

The Resurrection of Jesus—Powerlessness of unbelief to account for the genesis of Christianity—The certainty of the Resurrection as a fact—Worthlessness of the rationalistic objections—The courage and heroism of the Apostles arose from their faith in the Resurrection—Faith in the Resurrection and the conversion of St. Paul, - - - - - - - - - - - 410

CHAPTER V.

PAGE

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST—The Catholic Church is the original and authentic form of the Christian religion — Distinctive characteristics of the Catholic Church; her unity; papal infallibility; her independence. Objections—Is the material prosperity of non-Catholic countries a sign of their superior piety?—The intolerance of Catholicism—The stationary condition of Catholicism—Philosophical religion, - - - - - 456

CHAPTER VI.

THE CHURCHES—Protestantism; Lutherans; Calvinists; Anglicans —Examination and criticism of those systems—The Eastern Churches—Examination and criticism of their forms of Christianity—Their incompleteness, - - - - - - - - - 513

CHAPTER VII.

CHRISTIAN DOGMA—Difficulties in the faith—The Trinity—The Incarnation—The Holy Eucharist—Original sin—Hell—The harmonies of the faith—The logic of the creeds—Originality of Christianity—Progress of the faith—The evolution of dogma, - 571

CONCLUSION.

CHRISTIANITY OR AGNOSTICISM? - - - - - - - - 621

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

The Abbé Picard, the author of this book, was formerly engaged in professorial work in the diocese of Lyons, and is at present a valued member of the clergy of its Primatial Church. His professorial and ministerial experiences combined to make him feel deeply what is perhaps the saddest feature of the times, the way in which young men, and in a less degree young girls, are liable, on reaching adult age, to be smitten with Agnostic arguments, and to drift away from the practice and profession of their religion. Such young people are usually quite unaware of the nature and strength of the system of proof in which the Church finds her credentials, nor do they realise the serious objections to which the Agnostic position lies open. It was to instruct them in these two matters that the Abbé Picard was moved to write. It will be acknowledged that he has done his work skilfully, and brought together a collection of arguments, facts, and testimonies, impressive in itself, and fully sufficient to show that the Church has a solid groundwork for her claims. It is true that he describes his treatise as a statement of outlines only, and no doubt he refrains from entering deeply into many intricate questions which meet him in the course of his exposition. But that is as it should be, in view of the object he had before him. The average mind becomes impatient and too often loses its bearings when invited to take part in intricate discussions, nor are these really required to meet the objections of the club and the drawing-room, to which, much more

than to those of the study, the spread of Agnosticism is attributable. And if there are those whose mental necessities demand something more searching and profound, a book like the present may still be of assistance as a beginning and introduction to further study.

In France this volume, published some two years ago, has had a favourable reception and been the instrument of much good. It has, therefore, been thought desirable to translate it for use in this country, where the need is the same, but the means of supplying it are sadly deficient.

This English edition is a translation, not an adaptation, but a few footnotes and references to accessible English authors have been added by the translator, who desires to thank the Rev. John MacLeod, S.J., for kindly revising the translation and reading through the proofs.

LETTERS OF APPROBATION.

I.

Lyons, 18*th October*, 1896.

My Dear Abbé,—

I cannot but praise your noble undertaking. The book which you publish comes as much from your priestly heart as from your intellect. Your talent has combined in this volume all the resources of erudition enlisted in the service of logical proof. You have understood how to write in a style which is vigorous and yet attractive, thus adding a charm to the aridity of this discussion, abstruse in itself, and at times apt to be tedious in other hands.

One feels the pulsations of your apostolic heart, more particularly in the appeal you make to the young, in your anxiety to lead them away from the deceptive illusions of so many wrong systems. I, therefore, bless these pages with my whole heart, containing as they do a complete apologetic address to studious youth. I pray to Almighty God that a great number of young students, by rejecting the vanities of a life that has no object before it, or one fixed only on earthly hopes, may raise their minds to those higher thoughts which you open out to them, and, by following you throughout your reasoning, may embrace under your guidance the whole body of truth, and thus avoid the abyss of uncertainty and doubt.

Accept, dear abbé, the assurance of my most affectionate regard, and receive my most paternal blessing.

✠ Pierre,
Archbishop of Lyons and Vienne,
Primate of Gaul.[1]

[1] The archbishop was raised to the Cardinalate in April, 1897.

II.

LAVAL, 19*th October*, 1896.

MY DEAR ABBÉ,—

I am one of the first to greet the appearance of your excellent book, "CHRISTIAN OR AGNOSTIC?" Under the brevity of this title and under its novelty there is hidden a real and powerful exposition of revealed religion. You know admirably how to vindicate our beliefs from the specious and learned attacks of modern philosophy and free-thought. What is still better, you gather, from our adversaries themselves, the most convincing points of your triumphant refutation.

Your argument is this—One must either be a Christian or an Agnostic. Every other state of mind regarding the problems of the origin and end of being—Spiritualism, Evolution, Pantheism, Atheism—is condemned by force of logic. If the arguments for Christianity do not convince, how can the arguments for spiritualism do this? How much less, again, can the hypothesis of evolution or the paradoxes of Pantheism and Atheism? I observe, moreover, that you have succeeded in imparting life and freshness to the classical proofs of the supernatural by numerous arguments drawn from each one's experience in the intellectual and moral life—arguments which, by the personal character with which they are invested, are, of all others, the most powerful in determining one's religious convictions. In that which relates to the divinity of Christianity, you have—and I congratulate you on this—ably and learnedly developed your thesis on "The Authority of the New Testament." In fact, when Christianity is in question, it is not sufficient to prove that the morality of Christ is sublime, or that Christianity has promoted civilisation, or that Christians practise what Lacordaire termed the "refined virtues"; it is essential to prove that the historical personage called Jesus of

Nazareth is indeed what His disciples affirm that He declared Himself to be, *i.e.*, "The Son of the Living God, who came into the world to save fallen man." By remembering the admonition of the patriarch, "God needeth not that we should lie for Him," you have not only faithfully expressed the objections of unbelievers, but you have defined them with a clearness and precision not always met with in their own writings. This spirit of perfect fairness also prompts you to omit what I should term the oratorical proofs of Christianity.

It only remains for me to say, my dear abbé, that, in compiling this book, you have taught those of our younger priests, who are endowed with sufficient ability, how to make use of their leisure moments. The laborious studies to which your work bears testimony, prove the energy and perseverance of your efforts. Above all, you have achieved a very important success on behalf of university students of our times, by providing them with a preservative of their faith, or a help which will enable those in doubt to recover it from amidst the thousand systems by which it is too often obscured. Allow me, then, to congratulate you with all my heart, both as a bishop and also as a native of Lyons, for a work which, without doubt, is not intended for the general public, but will be appreciated by a select class of readers, and, indeed, by all who love the works of profound thinkers. Accept, my dear abbé and former curate, with my sincere congratulations, my most affectionate regards.

✠ Pierre Joseph,
Bishop of Laval.

III.

Extract from a letter written by the Right Hon. W. E. GLADSTONE to the Author:—

HAWARDEN, 18*th April*, 1897.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,—

You did me great and undeserved honour by presenting me your volume, "Chrétien ou Agnostique." In the argument for Theism and for Christianity all my sympathies and convictions are with you, and I hope God may bless your book and cause it to save many souls from unbelief. . . .

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

"*Scribo vobis, juvenes, quoniam fortes estis.*—I write to you young men, because you are strong." (St. John to the young men of Ephesus.)—1 Ep., Chap. ii. 14.

THE religious crisis which almost every man of education in our times has to pass through commences, nowadays, at a much earlier period of life than formerly. It is a rare thing in these times to hold convictions that have not cost a struggle. But this "Crisis of Faith," as it is called by Guizot, never presented itself so early to the mind as during the last twenty years. It attacks the youth, not to say the child, as soon as his reasoning powers begin to develop. And how could it be otherwise under present circumstances? In all the schools under Government in France, from the lowest to the highest grades, the idea of religion is systematically proscribed, and treated with a contempt far more injurious than active hostility. If it be admitted, in some few of them, it is merely as a sort of decoration or decoy; for official education still sacrifices a few trifles to Christianity. But, as soon as the young man quits the State colleges, the religious question, now engaging all intellectual minds, is at once brought before him. He asks himself the reason why, for nearly twenty years, this religious war has distracted our country. He is astonished that his teachers have left him uninstructed in the tenets of faith. Curiosity on the one hand, an instinctive sense of justice on the other, cause him to reflect upon these great questions. Even the young man who happily possesses Christian parents cannot keep his eyes closed; he sees that,

side by side with the Christian school which he attends, there is a secularist school, where the religious teaching he has received is treated as mere fable. Though he may not know how to express his thoughts, he realises sufficiently well that the State, and a considerable portion of society, attach no importance whatever to religion. He is amazed that the one thing which he has been taught to look upon as the most certain and most important of all, is precisely that which is most contested and despised. He meets men of education and good social position who look on these problems as childish and unworthy of a moment's attention. He becomes restless and inclined to doubt. Next his mind is harassed by anxieties and perplexities which neither the authority of his parents nor the majesty of the Church's history for nineteen centuries can entirely satisfy. If he has been thoroughly imbued with Christian faith and feeling, he will not easily detach himself from the religion of his early years. He will conform to it for some time to come. But his faith, assailed ever, will gradually die out through contact with the world and the reading of dangerous books. There is great need, then, of some outspoken and persuasive word, or, failing this, some able and well-reasoned book on the subject that may revive the youth's faltering faith. How many young men, even of the better sort, are in want of the right word, or book, to enlighten and convince their minds! Our desire is to be such a guide to them. Our object is to help those who are in earnest, which many of them are, during this painful period of their life; to aid them to reason out their faith, if they still preserve it; or to help them to recover it, should it be lost. Would that all, before condemning our dogmas, could be persuaded to make a careful and impartial examination of them. Justice and loyalty require that the Church should not be condemned before she has been heard. All men ought, on the contrary, to examine her claims with minds free from prejudice, and only then decide. We have no fear as to the result of such

research. "The Christian cause," says Tertullian, "only fears to be condemned without due study, Truth does not ask for indulgence; it only asks for justice."[1]

Besides, the soil is well prepared. At the beginning of this century educated youth was dissipated and immoral; later, about 1850, it became impious. In the little world of school, those who preserved the religion of their homes concealed its practices as well as their beliefs. Ozanam and his friends were looked on as heroes when they proclaimed themselves Christians before their doubting and mocking companions. At the Normal School the number of those who, like the Perrauds and the Heinrichs, were not ashamed to call themselves Catholics was very small indeed. The youth of that period considered an ironical disregard of all religious restraint to be the mark of a robust intelligence. Let us try to appreciate the distance traversed since that day. At the present time young men who, in the great schools and higher classes in our Lycées, look beyond material things and ponder over religious questions, are no longer to be counted on the fingers. A student who prays has ceased to be a phenomenon. Even at the universities the Gospel and the Church are treated as serious things. There is a wish for information concerning them. At least the moral law of the Gospel is readily accepted by these young men, and dogma is the only outstanding stumbling-block. They become Idealists, Spiritualists, even Mystics, but not Christians.

My object is to show to youth that, apart from Christian dogma, man is condemned to ignorance regarding his origin and his destiny. The various doctrines which have been offered as a substitute to explain these things—like Materialism, Positivism, and Evolution—are mere hypotheses, the verification of which appears to be utterly impossible. Even the supernatural, though it may be

[1] Tert. "I. Apol."

supported by solid arguments, scarcely throws any light on the problem of our religion, and much less still on that of our destiny. It proves the existence of God. It concludes, inferentially, that if God exists He must be good and just, but we shall see how many questions of capital importance it leaves unanswered. How many facts seem to be utterly irreconcilable with it! In reality, the supernatural derives all its strength from Christianity. Before the coming of Jesus Christ, the most varied and powerful intellects would acknowledge only the possibility of the existence of God, of the soul, and of immortality. If the positive proofs of Christianity do not satisfy, and the multitude of witnesses then alive who "saw with their eyes and touched with their hands" the Christian facts, fail to convince, how can the proofs of the supernatural do so, since they are not offered by living witnesses, but are only the inferences of our feeble reason or the explanations of individuals, which, moreover, are contradicted by others who argue with equal power and logic? Indeed, strangely enough, there is not a single system of philosophy which is not opposed by seemingly irreconcilable facts. Nature is silent regarding itself. We seek to find out its secret. In conducting our argument carefully, it strikes us that God is the best explanation of what we see around us. This conclusion, doubtless, is clearly drawn out, and yet God remains silent. How much happier we should be if He would only say to us—"Behold, I am here." But Jesus Christ has shown Himself. He lived. He made known His rights. He maintained them, notwithstanding all opposition, and He consecrated them by His death. To the Jews who charged Him to declare whether He were the Christ, the Son of God, He answered—"If I do the works of my Father, though you will not believe Me, believe the works" (St. John x. 38). He performed many marvels "such as no other man had done," as He said Himself. His testimony is either true or it is false. In any case,

it is a living testimony. All that we have to do is simply to examine its value. "If you can persuade me that God exists; that I shall appear before His face after this life is ended; that in the fulness of the time appointed, God came amongst men, and spoke with them, I defy philosophers, scholars, pleasure, ambition, or death to deprive me of such a hope; all historical events united would fade before the brightness of such good tidings" (Aug. Cochin, "Les Espérances chrétiennes"). This is the thought which has given birth to the present book. If any one is sincere, and desires to be logical, there can for him be no middle path. He must be either a Christian or an Agnostic. The latter term, borrowed from modern philosophy, has been selected for want of any clearer and more expressive word.[1]

It is necessary either to be a Christian—that is, accept Christianity in its completeness, and live up to its convictions—or to become an Agnostic; that is to say, to believe no doctrine, to be guided by no master, live on from day to day in life's narrow routine, and to arrange to pass the short span of earthly existence to the best advantage, without a care for the morrow, since in the Agnostic hypothesis there exists no morrow. "Let us crown ourselves with roses before they be withered, for this our portion, and this is our lot—*Coronemus nos rosis, antequam marcescant: quoniam hæc est pars nostra, et hæc est sors*" (Wisd. ii. 8, 9). The arrangement of subjects in this Essay is extremely simple. I have done my best to keep to the traditional order of the demonstration of Christianity, beginning by establishing the proofs of the supernatural. In fact, though there are some who think as I do, there are others who look for proof of the supernatural as the necessary basis on which Christianity rests, and who would not examine the claims of the latter so long as they considered the former a chimera or a mere probability. And as, from force of circumstances, the question of the origin of things has become the strategical centre of the battle between

[1] The term Agnostic was invented by the late Professor Huxley.

truth and error, I discuss the cosmical, biological, and anthropological problems—Is God the first principle and the necessary end of the universe, or is this only an antiquated and worn-out formula? If God exists, where is He? What is the origin of life? Whence comes the soul? Is the soul free, and has it freedom of will for good or for evil? The best means of easing troubled consciences is to look the questions of the nineteenth century in the face, and to expose the insufficiency and weakness of the systems invented by the adversaries of Spiritualism. Spiritualism, properly understood, I affirm exists in all its purity and strength among Christians alone. They alone possess the living God. This living God, this Heavenly Father, was made known to the world by Jesus. Why not ask ourselves: "Who is this Jesus of Galilee, who abolished the idols of the most civilised portion of the world? Who is this crucified Jew, who came out of an exclusive country province, who was set up as the Ideal One at Rome and at Athens, and who, according to the saying of His bitterest enemy, created "the eternal religion of Mankind"? Does this religion which He founded rest on supernatural facts? Are these facts proved? Are the books of the New Testament authentic? Are they, as we have them, truthful? And, if they are true, are the extraordinary facts related in them miraculous? Is the religion of Jesus Christ anything more than a refined mythology, no less false than the worship of the Olympian gods? Did Jesus Christ institute a "Church" as the source of His power on earth? And, if He did so, which, among the various Christian communities, has a right to this title? After examining these questions I arrive at this conclusion, which is that of all logicians, viz., that there is nothing between belief in the Church and Scepticism. Being compelled to deal with a multitude of questions, and being desirous of not becoming tedious, I have endeavoured to include the chief objections, omitting nothing essential to

the proofs adduced. To be treated of as fully as they deserve, these questions would need as many, or more, volumes than there are chapters in this volume. I have but sketched out the broad outlines, taking care to refer for their development to special works. Treatises on Philosophy and existing Apologetics have helped me greatly, and I have always been careful to name my authorities. Skill is needed to condense much matter into few pages, to choose the best out of many proofs, and to present them in their full force. It may be noticed that I frequently mention the admissions of Unbelievers—"building," as Bossuet says, "the fortresses of Juda from the waste and ruins of those of Samaria." (Sermon on Providence.)

How happy I should feel were it in my power to give to the studious easier access to the great problems which it is often considered a duty to conceal from them. It is willingly believed by some that in shunning such questions they are best disposed of, and that the dangers of science are most effectually avoided by remaining in ignorance of them. "Hath God any need of your lie, that you should speak deceitfully for Him?" (Job xiii. 7). We ought not to be blindly ignorant of hostile reasonings; we should know these reasons, and be able to discuss them and to expose their fallacies. To maintain that it is a virtue in a young man not to inquire, is a blunder which generally defeats the end in view. Thought and philosophical reflection cannot remain dormant in these times. "The leading strings of the adult child must be loosened" ("A Discourse on National Education," by Père Didon, O. P., August 1896). To imagine that ignorance is the best safeguard against the attacks upon our faith, is to misunderstand the period in which we live, and to misjudge human nature. Sophisms assail a man on every side; prejudices disturb the mind; passion wounds the heart. It is necessary to enlighten and assist him; moreover, many things are disputed as a mere form. "Beneath them all lies a question of theology," said

Proudhon, and he was right. The great question of the day is the religious question. It is the priest's duty to explain this to youth, to make Christianity intelligible, to excite love for it, to show that Christ is the "Word" required to solve the enigma of life, to fill the mind of the young man with light, and his heart with faith and love.

Young Men! I confide this book to you: read it; get others to do likewise. *Tolle et lege.* I hope that it will clear up difficulties, and help to render your Christian convictions stable. Whatever may happen, I feel convinced you will acknowledge that I have dealt with these questions in all sincerity and in an unbiassed manner, without minimising the arguments of unbelief, nor those more to be dreaded ones, which reflection and the experiences of life are apt to give rise to in intelligent minds. In giving these pages your attentive perusal, you will make what the English expressively term the "cross-examination" of religion; that is to say, an examination opposed to the claims of Christianity, with the result that the thousand doubts which disturb souls in our day will cease to trouble you. The spectacle of this century, so amenable to religious impressions on the one hand, but so incredulous regarding any fixed form of religion on the other, will not unsettle you. You will not be ignorant of the conclusions of science; the various philosophical systems will not be unknown to you; but, more privileged than the scientists and exponents of these systems, you will not be without an answer to questions of higher and more vital importance. You will not be "carried about by every wind of doctrine," as they are who know not Jesus Christ. You will, from your own place of safety, compassionate doubt as an evil thing that has passed away, an enemy no longer to be feared. Convinced, by unanswerable proofs, of the divinity of religion, you will feel and know that above all transitory human systems there exists that "divine truth, which abides for ever"—*Veritas Domini manet in æternum.*

LOUIS PICARD.

PART I.

CHRISTIANITY.

CHAPTER I.

SCIENCE AND THE GREAT PROBLEMS CONCERNING MAN.

"Sublime conception of an evil genius, if it brought forth a creation, a man, and God to his image! Shadows of a dream!"—LAMARTINE, "Cours familier de litterature, 3 entrétien."

"I have studied science all my life; yet, if I wrote all that is worth remembering of what I have learned, the manuscript would be so small that you might carry it away in an envelope."—GÖETHE, "Fragments des conversations de Göethe sur la nature."

"Sors tua mortalis; non est mortale quod optas—Thy state is that of man, but thou dost not aspire to an end which is only human."—OVID, "Metam.": Liv. II., Chap. v.

AT the age when he begins to reflect, a young man is liable to be inclined to doubt. He perceives how the minds of men are divided on the great problems that concern humanity. He has learnt, and he sees, that some men of great intelligence are anti-Christian, or even atheistic. He knows that the current of contemporary science turns further and further away from spirituality and from Christianity. The laws of his country take little or no account of the religious aspect of things, and seem to be uninterested in these great questions. Jouffroy, speaking of the doubt that harassed his youth, said—"The winds of scepticism had shaken the edifice of my belief even to its foundations. Strong objections were floating in the air, and formed around me, as it were, an atmosphere sprung from the genius of two centuries of scepticism."[1] If such was the state of youthful minds in the time of Jouffroy, what must it be in these days? The winds of doubt that disturbed his philosophy blow stronger than ever. A deadly war is declared in the name of science, not only against Christianity, but against all religion. As long as a youth is still a child, the authority of his parents

[1] "Nouveaux Mélanges philosophiques," p. 82.

and preceptors suffices for his preservation. But, as he grows older, he reflects more deeply, and doubt may then assail him. Furthermore, he knows that the beliefs imposed upon him are the groundwork of his morality. Then he feels an imperious need to form for himself new religious convictions.

He reads, and pursues inquiries. Science answers, makes promises, and claims to solve all questions.[1] Its part is to take the place of Faith, because it holds the true, and not the chimerical, interpretation of things. He hears further that "God" is "a pious old word, a little misty, which needs a very subtle interpretation" (Rénan); that "a man must descend very low in the scale of intelligence in order to discover that the world has any other cause than itself" (About); that "life in all its grades is the result of pure evolution from matter, and that man himself is only a more perfect animal" (Darwin); that "liberty is a mere illusion, and the soul, a word which expresses the sum total of all our intellectual faculties" (Littré, Leblais, Taine); "the supernatural, an idle and foolish notion"; "the future life a dream" (Rénan); "Christianity an immense and world-wide illusion, or else a detestable imposture" (Strauss, Soury); "Jesus, a great philosopher, and a powerful reformer" (Rénan); in a word, that "Science is the Religion of the future," and that, through her, the restoration of knowledge will be brought about (Littré, Lefèvre). Christians are but simpletons. Anti-Christians, and they alone, are scientists.

Such is the language that is addressed to youth in the name of science. These opinions disturb his mind. He would fain decide whether this science of the disputants and the adversaries of dogma is true, and discover whether it offers proof for its positive assertions. We propose to the student to examine along with him all these problems, being assured of satisfying him that it is by an incomprehensible mistake that science pretends to be alone able to decide such important questions, for instance, as these—

[1] The Right Hon. A. J. Balfour, in "A Defence of Philosophic Doubt," arrives at the conclusion that "we are without any rational ground for believing in science. . . . We are without any rational ground for determining the logical relation which ought to subsist between science and religion."

Whence do we come? Whither do we go? What are we? Has life any meaning?

It does not enter into our minds to deny the magnificent discoveries made by science in the present age. Nothing less than the transformation of this globe has occurred. Job, thousands of years ago, wrote of the empire that man holds over nature—"There is a place where silver is formed; there is a recess where gold is hidden. He has drawn forth iron from the earth. He extracts copper from the rocks. He defines the limits of darkness; he unveils even those deep foundations that approach the shades of death. He hollows out through the mountains ways not before trodden. He goes down into the bowels of the earth. He crushes the rocks, and tears up the mountains from their roots. He opens a bed for rivers through stone, and brings to light their most secret treasures. He stays their course, and exposes to the light their abysses." We might call this a strophe of a poem written yesterday. And, truly, what changes have been wrought upon the earth during the past fifty years! The living forces of nature, set to work by human genius, have altered the original form of the world. By means of the compass, the telescope, and other inventions of men, the ethereal distances have been extended infinitely, and peopled by myriads of vast worlds, the weight, volume, distance, and number of which are laid down precisely in scientific records and surpass all imagination. Piercing the crust of the earth to find the traces of the oldest disturbances in our planet, science brings to view the remains of forgotten species, and the signs of the existence of millions, and millions of millions, of inhabitants of the primitive world, who have struggled, suffered, and then disappeared, to give place to new series of beings; a mysterious, unrecorded history, which has been accumulating through ages innumerable. By taking captive elements, in themselves the most dangerous and intangible, modern science combines or disintegrates them at her will. She fuses the metals; controls the lightning; causes the waters of separated oceans to flow together. She boldly sets her dwelling in the skies. She ensnares the sun's rays in dark chambers, catches their impression upon a plate of sensitive metal and produces

portraits and landscapes in their most delicate features and colours. She encrusts upon films of copper, songs and speeches, whose resonances are made perpetual. She has now discovered rays which traverse muscle and nerve, but not bones or metals, thence projecting, on sensitive plates, skeletons or metallic bodies. By rapid circulation before the beholder of a series of photographs of bodies in motion, she makes apparent, through continuous impressions upon the retina, those very movements.[1] By means of seropathy she is discovering how to protect us against poisonous microbes, which, despite their minuteness, often destroy man himself.[2] By her power, space is being eliminated, and the most distant regions of earth touch one another. She levels up valleys, pierces mountains, adorns or disfigures our country, and ameliorates all the conditions of human life. Every law discovered in the order of nature is applied as an invention, or improvement, in the industrial system. Since the possession by science of the experimental method, far from disappointing our patience, each decade of the century has invariably surpassed and amazed expectation in its discoveries. We are both fortunate in, and grateful for, this progress, since its object is to confer the greatest possible benefits upon humanity. It is the realisation of the command of God to man to "subdue the earth," and we believe Dante when he says that "industry is the child of God, and imitatrix of the divine power that governs the world."[3]

Filled with justifiable pride at her discoveries, science hoped to unlock the explanation of the spiritual and moral world by the key of the material world. She proclaimed the advent of the epoch when new light should be thrown upon the questions of the origin and purpose of things. This was her fundamental mistake. The experiment has been tried, and the mysteries of creation and of the end of all things bring us back again to the limits of man's nature, and to his dependence upon God. The great problem of man's being remains undiscoverable by scientific investigations, and must ever remain obscure to unaided reason.

[1] "Rayons cathodiques dits rayons *x* de Röntgen, et cinématographe," de M. Lumière, de Lyon.
[2] Docteur Roux.
[3] "La Divina Commédia," c. I.

The question that we have to consider is the following:—Is science able to solve the great problems that agitate and preoccupy the minds of men? Can she satisfy the imperious craving that we experience of arriving at certitude as to the origin of this world, as to the existence of a supreme cause, as to our own origin, our nature, and the end of our being? This is the great problem. How is it to be solved? We reply, by a discussion upon the very ground to which criticism has carried the inquiry; by an earnest appeal to that very science whose conclusions, it is asserted, are against us.

We assert, in the first place, that science must be kept within the limit of questions which, according to its admitted methods, it has the capacity to handle and determine. It is unfortunate that the advance made by scientists should lead them to maintain that they must rule alone, and that moral science, which has a separate existence, must be subordinate to them. Science, in the modern usage of the word, is the verification of things in being. Its object is, therefore, research—the discovery of those facts which the earth and the universe present to us. Within its domain are the laws which are founded on external observation, and do not pass beyond the limits of induction. It is concerned, not with the first cause of those things that exist, but with the conditions of their existence, and its sphere of duty does not warrant an attempt to define on any questions concerning their origin. One may recognise the absolute independence of the natural sciences and rejoice in their progress, and yet preserve intact that belief in the supernatural which depends upon other processes of acquired knowledge. Moreover, one can only smile at the puerile, free-thinking assertion, so often repeated, that "the progress of science in this nineteenth century suffices of itself to destroy all faith in the supernatural." From this standpoint, writers who, like Draper, pretend to count the defeats religion has sustained by producing the roll of the victories of positive science, make a cheap bargain of their triumphs.[1] It is remarkable, on the other hand, that no contradiction has been found to exist between what is

[1] Draper, "The Conflict between Science and Religion."

scientifically certain and the dogmas of Christianity, and that the most active and most skilful scientists who have cleared the way for especially valuable discoveries in modern physics, such as Ampère, Claude Bernard, and Pasteur, have been not only theists, but also sincere Christians, and this through absolute conviction. They have not sought from natural science that which it could not impart, viz., the secret of nature's Author; but their belief in God, as the creator and disposer of all things, urged them to seek in the world, which they knew to be wisely constituted, laws more simple and comprehensible. So far from there being any contradiction between the developments of science and the religious beliefs of these men, their most helpful assistant, in their highly fruitful researches, was their faith. "Catholicism hinders thought," said M. Thiers, "only in those who are not made for thinking."[1] Let us inquire, then, what science, thus understood, teaches respecting the creation and end of beings; let us see whether she can attain to certitude, and whether she can provide the spiritual aliment which man needs in order to enable him to fulfil the end of his existence.

I.

The history of the physical and moral world, as traced out by modern science, is made up of three portions:—1st, the history of the inorganic world up to the appearance of life; 2nd, the history of the organic world; and 3rd, the history of the creation of man.[2]

Concerning the origin of the world, science can speak with confidence on certain points. It has succeeded in ascertaining the course of the earth's development and its great antiquity. The scientific history of the inorganic world has been reduced to the great hypothesis of Laplace. True, this is merely an hypothesis; but it is one so well supported by established physical laws—it can so easily be verified in some of its points by experiments made on a small scale in our laboratories—that we may regard it as a truth acquired from science. According to this theory,

[1] "Discours sur la question romaine." 1865.
[2] See "La physique moderne," par E. Naville. 1889.

the world is a vast evolution out of matter and movement, a great problem in general mechanics. The idea of mechanism is thus the key to nature. In like manner the earth's past history consists of a series of cosmic crises, of which the earliest phase was the breaking up of the nebular mass, and its reduction to the present solar system. The second phase was a series of telluric crises, of productions and destructions, forming rocks, continents, seas, and various flora and fauna. The earth we live on was then formed, strata upon strata, by the convulsions which in turn have burnt, inundated, transformed, and moulded it. The beings that inhabit the earth appeared one after another; granite existed before vegetation, and vegetation before animal life; birds and fish existed before the mastodon; man appeared last of all. Had God so willed, the condition of the world might have been at all times such as it is now; but, in fact, our planet has undergone many cataclysms and upheavals which have re-arranged, in various ways, all the materials of which it is composed. The igneous rocks and sedimentary deposits are truthful registers, whose pages, so to speak, have preserved, day by day, the history of past ages. In each layer of the earth's crust a fossilised flora and fauna are found, the remains of which are as archæological medals bearing the impress of those distant periods. The sea that bathes our shores and the air that we breathe have attained their conditions of relative equilibrium only after periods of disturbance when the world was nothing but chaos. The universe could address to us the words of Father Time in a well-known poem—"Thou hast known me only in my old age."[1] This is what astronomy and geology teach us concerning the origin of the universe. But these data being accepted as our point of departure, must we acknowledge God to be the origin of matter and motion, or are these in truth necessary and eternal? What does science pronounce on this head? Science proves indirectly the divine origin of the universe, though the proof is such as will never completely satisfy a captious inquirer. If, say the

[1] De Pressensé, "Les Origines." Darra, relying upon the deposits which form the crust of the globe, estimated that forty-eight millions of years were required for the formation of these. He distributes them as follows:—Primary epoch, thirty-six millions; secondary epoch, nine millions; tertiary epoch, three millions.—"Manual of Geology." 1883.

physicists,[1] all in physical nature is matter and force, we can assert that "force" is matter in motion, and that "matter" is the manifestation of force. If it be granted that the total energy of the universe is constant, if it be the result of this principle that "the entire universe tends more and more towards a final condition, wherein all the movements of bodies will be converted into molecular motion," there must necessarily, after a certain number of ages, come a time when all matter in the universe will be found reduced to space without life, occupied exclusively by molecules, "causing those rapid oscillations which constitute heat, and retaining within themselves that entire sum of energy wherewith the universe was endowed in its beginning, but without the intrinsic possibility of any further change." The principle that the sum of the energies of the universe is as invariable as the sum of the molecules which constitute it would appear at first sight to favour the thesis of the eternity of the universe; but as there is a greater transformation of labour into heat than of heat into labour, it follows that in the world as a whole the amount of heat constantly increases at the expense of the amount of labour. On the other hand, heat tends to equalise and diffuse itself through space in a uniform manner, and as the disaggregation of bodies increases, it follows that the limit towards which the universe is advancing is a state of repose and stable equilibrium which will render any new transformation impossible, and which has been compared by the learned to the stillness of death. The conclusion to which these data point is that the world has but a limited duration. On the march of evolution, the *processus* which has occupied a whole eternity in coming forth ought to continue its progress for an eternity. The necessary effect of an eternal cause is necessarily eternal itself. Under such conditions, no phenomenon would be really possible, for, of their nature, phenomena must both begin and end; they must be produced, must produce, and then cease to be. The phenomenon in question, having had eternity for the accomplishment of its destiny, ought to finish, and cease to be, from all eternity. We may say, then, that if the

[1] Thèse brillamment soutenue, par Rodolphe Clausius et par Robert Mayer.

universe had always existed, if it was eternal, from all eternity, it must have exhausted all its processes, and have arrived at its *boundary limit.*[1]

Having come out of chaos, the universe will then return into chaos, but with this difference—it will no longer be animated by that rotary motion which the original chaos possessed. This motion will have been converted into heat. Such is to be the remote result of the physical laws controlling the world.

The demonstration of Clausius and Mayer is not rigorously correct. Indeed, to reason thus is to treat the question as one of metaphysics quite as much as one of science. In reality, the non-eternity of the universe is a rational conception which experience does not suggest. It lays hold of our reason, but, at the same time, cannot be put to the proof. Science can tell us very little upon this head, and this especially because certain facts seem to contradict the thesis of modern physicists. The earthquake at Lisbon, for example, in 1755, and in our day the elevation of a long strip of land in Chili, do not indicate a tendency towards a *boundary limit* in the formation or progress of the universe. Lamennais makes a profound remark on this subject—"The internal intelligence, of which we can have only a faint glimmering, will continue to direct the physical universe by cataclysm and silent evolutions, such as our own small brains can never know."[2] This is true. Whether we are believers in spirituality or are atheists, we can only treat of the atom hypothetically. What is the atom? Has it always existed, and how? The Christian knows by faith, but the scientists can learn nothing in reply from science. Is the atom simple, as Leibnitz holds? Is it compound, and extended, as the Scholastics and other schools of philosophy teach?[3] We have before us these hypotheses regarding physical sciences, which explain many things, and yet are, after all, only pure hypotheses—"Questions for children," says Voltaire, "who think they can bite the moon!" The Materialists start from this assertion, "that which exists has always existed in its present form," which

[1] See also Balfour Stewart on "The Conservation of Energy."
[2] "Lettre à la Comtesse de Senft."
[3] Extended matter is now proved to be an imaginary hypothesis.

is precisely the matter in dispute.[1] It is a principle which they assume to be granted to them. How can experience verify an argument tending to show either that the world had a beginning, or that it never could have had a beginning? In a certain page of his Essay upon Comte, Mill[2] wholly refuses to follow the founder of Positivism in his negative conclusions upon questions of origin. He says that, from the Positivist standpoint, "nothing compels the human race to reject theological conclusions respecting the origin of the world." This argument holds good against Materialism just as well as against Positivism. "The laws of nature," he repeats, "can give no account of their own origin. If the universe had a beginning, this beginning, by the very nature of the case, was supernatural."[3] We cannot decide negatively the problem of the beginning of things by experimental data obtained in the order of material phenomena and their laws. This order had no beginning, say the Materialists. But on what experiences does this kind of dogmatism rest? I propose the contrary hypothesis. I maintain the universe had a beginning. How can Materialists prove the contrary? By the examination of nature? She can account for what exists, but not for that which, by hypothesis, preceded what exists. It does not suffice to say that, if it were a question of origin, no theory based upon experiment would avail to decide it. It must be further allowed that no experience is sufficient to prove that there is not a question of origin to be entered upon, and that the order of actual phenomena is as eternal as it is fixed. Virchow admits this. "After all," he says, "no one knows what existed before that which exists. Science has only the data which the existing world affords. Naturalism goes beyond experience: it establishes itself as a system. But systems are much more the result of speculation than the result of experience." To argue as

[1] A recent author of this school writes—"The only attitude which in strict logic it is admissible to adopt towards the question concerning the being of a God is that of 'suspended judgment' . . . the ultimate is super-scientific, and so beyond the range of legitimate predication."—"A Candid Examination of Theism," p. 70. This is a very important admission.

[2] "Auguste Comte and Positivism," by John Stuart Mill.

[3] "Autobiography" of J. S. Mill.

Materialists do is to speculate, which is humiliating for those who despise speculation.

Now, M. Rénan comes in here to support the author of "The Origin of Species." "Time," says he, "is the general factor—the great co-efficient—of the eternal future."[1] The future, as it is not infinite, is and can only be nothingness—inevitable and absolute nothingness. What will be the issue? Nothing. What is existence apart from being? What is being without existence? Words, devoid of meaning. The potency of time is but a subterfuge. "In time," adds M. Rénan, "the atoms associated together, and matter was thus self-created."[2] Time is of absolute dynamic indifference. It is not a cause. One feels surprise when M. Rénan writes to M. Berthelot—"Do you not think that a molecule can well be, like all other things, *the product of time*, that it issues out of a phenomenon of long duration, and from an agglomeration kept up during millions and millions of ages?"[3] With much reason M. Rénan is answered, that "an aggregation of zeros, during millions of ages, would only amount to zero." Atoms may have had at their disposal infinite duration, but, even so, they could not, by combinations and mutual impact, have produced the universe. Geology teaches us that the terrestrial globe was in an igneous state at an epoch relatively near to us, and that life could only have begun to exist upon it a few thousand years ago. Moreover, as we have said, modern, cosmical, and astronomical systems, in place of a wild chaos of atoms, require from the beginning a certain order and a movement determined by the mass of the body. Descartes conceived the idea of a mechanical system regulated by invariable laws; Newton concluded that the circular movements of the planets emanated from God. We know the system which Laplace unfolds in his celebrated "Exposition du systeme du monde," which is reckoned the most elaborate synthesis of modern sciences. M. Faye, in his work "l'Origine du monde," supposes a primitive matter dis-

[1] Rénan, "Dialogues and Philosophic Fragments."

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Existence and being, though depending upon one another, are very distinct. Molecules are created, and are capable of change, by heat, by cold, by pressure, etc., without impairing their specific constitution. The stability of the molecular system is not an absolute but only a relative unchangeableness.

seminated in vast flakes, each animated by a double movement of very rapid translation and very slow gyration. Having classified the stars according to their colours, and relying upon spectroscopic analysis, the same scientist shows that the formation of all the stars is due to about the same cosmic epoch. This scientific conclusion is destructive to the materialistic and pantheistic theories. All such systems admit, implicitly or explicitly, a co-ordinating intelligence. We shall inquire later what this intelligence is. For the present it suffices to have made it clear in the name of science that the universe is not its own cause.

Science does, then, throw some light upon the important question of the origin of the world. She leaves an open field for the hypotheses of philosophy, and contradicts in nothing the decisions of faith. Faith explains the origin of the world by creation, but she decides nothing as to what relates to its formation.

Here we come upon the famous dispute regarding Concordism. We will say what we think upon this question, though perhaps it is a mistake to enter upon the discussion at all. Just now many exponents, among them the most moderate, yet not on that account less wise, conclude that there is no ground for treating of the question. In their opinion, the first chapter of Genesis is susceptible of various interpretations which may be freely held by Catholics, and that there is nothing which compels us to regard it as an historical or accurate account of the origin of things.[1] Again, not long since, our apologists determined that this book of Moses, written in an obscure corner of Asia more than thirty-five centuries before any definite discoveries of science had taken place, affirmed the great idea of progressive development. We will not profit even by this advantage. We will carefully avoid identifying the Bible with this or that cosmological system, or magnifying into an article of faith the result of our personal speculations, or deciding *a priori* difficulties which experience alone can explain. There is only one thing positive in the narrative of Moses, it is the dogma of creation. For the rest we need not stop to seek for a

[1] This was the opinion of the Hon. and Right Rev. Dr. William Clifford, Catholic Bishop of Clifton.

positive agreement between the text of Genesis and the discoveries of science. "An apologist, treating of origins, must take up a defensive position that is impregnable. He would do wrong to try to construct out of weak and fragile material such proofs as the reflux of the moving tide of science would sweep away." [1] Evolutionists may attack, if they please, the biblical account of successive creations. We refuse to follow them on that ground. Without going so far as to assume, with the late Bishop Clifford,[2] that we must only see in the first chapter of Genesis a hymn in honour of the days of the week, and the Sabbatical rest, *Deus requievit ab ipso opere quod patrarat,* we can maintain that God did not mean to reveal to Moses the divers phases of the organisation of the world. We must take the sacred books for what they are—that is, an instrument for revealing the great principles and bases of religious belief, not as treatises on the natural sciences. Jesus, who was all-wise, has not in the Gospels given us a single scientific lesson. Why should God act otherwise in the Bible? "Secret things to the Lord our God; things that are manifest to us and our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law."—Deut. xxix. 29. Who speaks thus? Moses himself, anticipating the questions we are considering. *Mundum tradidit disputationi eorum*—"God hath given over the world to the disputes of learned men," says Ecclesiastes. It would carry the matter too far, and compromise the sacred text, to urge that God willed to reveal to us in Genesis the history of geological formations. This is the old teaching, which affirmed that everything in the Bible is inspired; that there can be in it no contradictions, even in minor details, either on the part of the sacred writers themselves or between the sacred and profane authors. The opinion now prevalent is different. The Bible is not intended to teach natural science. Nevertheless, the Holy Spirit has truly preserved the sacred writers from all scientific error. The Bible has always come forth triumphantly from the most searching

[1] Abbé de Broglie, "La Transcendance du Christianisme."

[2] In the *Dublin Review*, 1888. The Bishop of Clifton's theory was not condemned at Rome, though it caused him to be designated by some Protestants "the Colenso of the Roman Church," a most unjust estimate of one whose loyalty to the Church was unimpeachable.

scrutiny and the most hostile criticism. Eminent rationalistic critics, as perfectly impartial as one can be who has a theory to advance, make no difficulty in acknowledging that the scientific discoveries of this century have in no way weakened the Mosaic cosmogony. The sacred authors received no inspiration upon the mysteries of physics or on the terrestrial disturbances that geology investigates. They spoke in the terms understood at their epoch. Furthermore, God, having inspired them to begin with, left the writers free to exercise their own style, genius, and habits of thought, and even, in a certain degree, to their recollection of things for a full expression of the truths they were charged to deliver to mankind. St. Jerome, who was most intimately acquainted with the sacred text, wrote—"As though there were not in the Scriptures many things delivered according to the belief of the epoch to which their realisation has regard, and not to the intrinsic verity of the facts themselves."[1] And again—"The truth and circumstances of the narrative are recorded, as we have already remarked, not following the order of material reality, but the opinions of the age."[2] St. Thomas, agreeing with St. Jerome, says—"The Scriptures speak in accordance with the common knowledge of things." These passages completely satisfy us. They show that we find, in ancient times, men strongly convinced of the inspiration of the Scriptures, who did not interpret them in so rigid a manner as do some of our contemporaries. Such treatment of the question of inspiration has become the current theory of the best informed and most unbiassed commentators. With this the recent Encyclical of Leo XIII. upon biblical studies is in entire harmony.

II.

After the questions concerning the origin and formation of the universe, the most important phenomenon in the

[1] "Quasi non multa in Scripturis sanctis dicantur, juxta opinionem illius temporis quo gesta referuntur, et non juxta quod veritas rei continebat."—In Jeremiam xxviii.

[2] "Historiae veritas et ordo servatur, sicut prædiximus, non juxta id quod erat, sed juxta id quod illo tempore putabatur."—Migne, t. IV., col. 850.

world is that of Life. In all times ardent inquirers have asked the question—What is the origin of Life; how did it commence? Among the ancient sages some believed that the origin of Life, like the sources of the Nile, is indiscoverable. Others maintained that matter, under the influence of moisture, heat, and light, could generate living beings spontaneously. At one time the existence of microscopic beings coming to life, apart from germs, was considered probable. Some Fathers of the Church held this view. St. Thomas admitted it. Buffon gave it the sanction of his name. But all of these attributed to the ordinances of God what the pagan philosophers held to be the offspring of mere chance. During the past thirty-four years the question of spontaneous generation has been examined anew, and this time scientifically. M. Pouchet, director of the Rouen Museum, eagerly undertook the solution of the problem, and affirmed that he could establish the fact of the production of life without germs. The adversaries of religion armed themselves with this doctrine of heterogeneity to maintain that life springs from matter itself without supernatural intervention. They fancied that they had lifted the last veil of Isis, and solved the mystery of life. This theory became the source of a system based on the unity in origin of all beings and their progressive transformations. "Twenty-five stages," according to Haeckel, "separate man from the monad." But M. Pasteur produced proof, in revising these experiments, that if life had been produced by experiments, held to be decisive, it was only because these experiments had not been made with that careful attention to minutiæ which was indispensable, and that the pretended spontaneous creations of elementary beings were invariably due to germs existing in the atmosphere and not perfectly eliminated. This is so certain that globes filled with vegetable or animal infusions, used during thirty years in his now famous experiments, and kept exposed to view in the laboratory of M. Pasteur, show no trace whatever of fermentation. The question was brought before the Academy, which pronounced the following verdict:—"The facts observed by M. Pasteur and contested by M.M. Pouchet, Jolly, and Musset are found to be absolutely

correct."[1] The experiments on which the proofs of spontaneous generation rested were, for the most part, defective. M. Pasteur gained the merit of clearing up all doubts respecting this problem by reducing the results of these experiments to their just value, and bringing greater precision to bear upon the whole subject. He has shown that the air is the vehicle which conveys multitudes of living germs.[2] Heterogeneity was disproved, in a full Assembly at the Sorbonne, by M. Pasteur in person, who exclaimed, at the close of his lecture—"Gentlemen, you now perceive that spontaneous generation is a mere chimera." The problem of creation remained unexplained.

Notwithstanding the effect produced by this test and others that followed, Tyndall did not hesitate to return to the opinion which he had at first upheld; yet the same professor has furnished the clearest demonstration of the truth. In consequence of the experiments made, he acknowledged that it was no longer possible to account for the formation of organisms, even the most simple, by the sole action of physico-chemical forces.[3]

Littré has already declared that "Life, as it is evidenced to our senses, is propagated only by parents; we have no right, from any experiment, to ascribe to the original a vital property exercising an action of which it is no longer capable."[4] "As to positive proofs in favour of this theory," Virchow says, "we possess none. No one has ever witnessed a genuine occurrence of spontaneous generation, and if there are any who still pretend to have seen such, it is not theologians who refute them, but naturalists." M. Flourens, in his book on Longevity, calls heterogeneity a hypothesis "very convenient, but very absurd." M. Karl Vogt decides against spontaneous generation.[5] The president of the British Association, Sir William Thomson,

[1] Paroles de M. Balard, rapporteur de la commission nommée par l'Académie. 1858.

[2] See Rapport de C. Bernard à l'Académie de médecine.

[3] Huxley admits that "the present state of knowledge furnishes us with no link between the living and the not living." Tyndall says—"Every attempt made in our day to generate life independently of antecedent life has utterly broken down." Clearly, then, life did not spring out of death; how, then, did it begin? Here evolution affords no answer. These two quotations are taken from "A Doubter's Doubts."

[4] "Spontaneous Generation and Transformism."

[5] See "Lehrbuch der Geologie," 3rd edition, vol. ii., pp. 467, 468.

in his discourse at the opening of the meeting in Edinburgh in 1871, said—"Science furnishes a multitude of invincible proofs against the hypothesis of spontaneous generation, as you have already heard from the lips of my predecessor in the chair, Mr. Huxley. A minute examination has not, to this day, discovered any other source of life than life itself."[1] If, after so weighty an announcement, the English professor supposes that the first germs of organic life reached our globe by means of aerolites, which brought them to us from other planets, there are few in whom such a proposition would not provoke a smile. The main problem is thus only shelved because we have still to explain the appearance of life in the stars, which are supposed to have transmitted the aerolites to us. Haeckel himself is forced to admit this. He declared that "living germs have never been seen to be produced by experiments. But," he adds, "experiments made artificially cannot reproduce the conditions presented by our sphere in primitive epochs." We must allow that Haeckel is right. Both Atheists and Theists have gone too far: the former in asserting that the doctrine of M. Pouchet, if it be true, is conclusive against the existence of a Supreme Cause; the latter in drawing from M. Pasteur's experiments the triumphant conclusion that now Theism is scientifically demonstrated. In our opinion, the result of the experiments of M. Pasteur only shows that, under present conditions, spontaneous generation does not take place, but this does not prove that, under other conditions, it could not be produced. For is it certain that the physical state of the world has always been what it is now? The conclusion would not be accepted as decisive, unless the actual condition of the world were demonstrated to have been the same at all times. It would then be certain that life, not being able to produce itself spontaneously, must have been created. But this, after all, would only

[1] Sir William Thomson, on the same occasion, stated that "inanimate matter cannot become animate except under the influence of matter which is already living. This is a fact in science which seems to be as well ascertained as the law of gravitation. I am ready to accept as an article of faith in science, valid for all time and in all space, that life is produced by life and only by life." From this we observe that ambiogenesis is unsupported by evidence and incapable of proof.

be an argument. In the interests even of the cause which we defend, let us be moderate in our deductions; at the same time, we beg the theorists to be moderate also in theirs. Evolutionists, though forced to admit that spontaneous generation is non-existent, still maintain that it has occurred at some former time. The sole evidence adduced is that "it must have occurred," because this is essential to their theory![1] Since, however, evolutionists profess to rely solely upon experimental demonstrations, and do not allow the force of hypotheses which experiment does not sustain, they stand self-condemned by the laws which they have formulated.[2]

According, then, to our actual experience, the different orders of existence know no boundary, and have their definite limits. We have never seen life come forth from the mineral kingdom. It has never been produced in the retorts of men of science. Nor has it ever issued from the immense alembic of nature. It is an axiom that "every cell proceeds from a cell"—*Omnis cellula ex cellula.* Consequently, even admitting spontaneous generation and the eternity of matter, all would not be explained. Supposing that in prehistoric times there was such a thing as spontaneous generation, it would not have hindered living beings from being totally distinct from things without life. If it were true that matter once gave birth to a few microscopic beings, would that sufficiently explain the existence of the thousands of species of animals and vegetables of a higher order? To get rid of God in the origin of species, the Atheist has need of some other expedient. He finds that he is driven to complete his theory by a new theory,

[1] "At some time or other ambiogenesis *must* have taken place. If the hypothesis of evolution be true, living matter must have arisen from non-living matter." -Huxley, "Encyc. Brit."—*Biology.* The evolutionary hypothesis is, therefore, dependent upon the unproven theory of ambiogenesis!

[2] Butschli, a German, by a mixture of oil and soapy matter, produced, or rather thought he produced, "protoplasm." To make the statue of a man is not to make a man. The protoplasm of Butschli may outwardly have resembled living protoplasm, but it differed essentially in its chemical composition, and still more, inasmuch as his "protoplasm" was incapable of multiplying and changing itself. In a word, it was something apart from vital endowment. Butschli produced a likeness of protoplasm!—a feat which the youngest tyro in chemical science would hardly consider worthy of a boast.

attractive it may be, but not established by science, viz., that of "Transformism."

According to a certain number of scientists, the living and organic world came forth complete, following evolution according to the laws of nature, from a primitive, simple germ, which was, as it were, the Egg of the world![1] Evolution is the negation of special creations. It denotes that the creative act was an act unique and absolute, which has not been historically repeated at precise periods. Such would be the growth of a large tree, of which primitive protoplasm was the embryo. Progressive evolution is the A B C of materialism. Can we hold this hypothesis as required for gaining a scientific certificate? We shall see that science has not succeeded in establishing this theory, which is no more satisfactory than other opposing theories.

The transformist movement, to which Darwin gave his name, is truly the most noticeable effort that has been made in our day against the theistic explanation of the universe. After endless discussions, Darwinism has at length become one of the best-known systems. We will discuss it only as far as it may be necessary in order to dispose of the objections against finality which are said to be founded upon it. We will strip this system of all technical details, serving only to render it obscure, and will remove all the complications tending to involve it.

According to Darwin, all living things have issued from a small number of types, primitively created, and probably from one unique species. Among the representatives of this primordial kind were produced accidental varieties which, in perpetuating and accentuating themselves more and more, formed distinct varieties. Among these kinds further accidental variations produced genera. In like manner these developed into orders, classes, and kingdoms. In the course of these successive transformations, accumulated during millions of centuries before we arrive at the existing condition of things, a primitive, rudimentary being, an earth-worm, or perhaps a simple organic cell,

[1] "If all living beings have been evolved from pre-existing forms of life, it is enough that a single particle of living protoplasm should have once appeared on the globe, as the result of no matter what agency. In the eyes of a consistent evolutionist any further independent formation of protoplasm would be sheer waste."—Huxley, "Encyc. Brit."—*Biology.*

came to be transformed, in the first place, into vegetables and animals of very simple organisation, and these, by degrees, formed the plants and animals of all the existing orders. How came these transformations to be wrought? Among living beings there is a perpetual struggle for existence. Little by little the strongest and the best suited for survival conquered and destroyed the weakest and least suited. This is the "Struggle for Life," or vital antagonism.[1] As soon as an alteration was wrought in the organisation of one of these beings, if it were of a sort likely to be serviceable to it, it transmitted it to its progeny, rendering them, in turn, more and more perfect. If, on the other hand, a hurtful change arose, it tended to their extinction, and disappeared with them. Darwin calls this the Law of Natural Selection, which preserves the useful and roots out the hurtful modifications of species. Thus the struggle for life and natural selection, to which must be added the correlation of increase, the influence of environment, temperature, heat, and other local surroundings, are the causes by which Darwin explains the succession of beings which proceed from a primitive organism, including all existing species, besides those that are extinct, the fossil remains of which are found in the bosom of the earth.

At the outset, Darwin did not include man in this theory, at least not explicitly. In a later publication he does not hesitate to trace man's descent from a species of ape.[2] It is fair to say that Darwin never intended to deny the existence of God. On the contrary, he clearly admits God as the creator of the primitive monad, but the anti-religious

[1] "It is probable, or almost certain, that several of my conclusions will hereafter be found erroneous; this can hardly fail to be the case in the first treatment of a subject." — "Descent of Man," Darwin, p. vi., 2nd ed., 1888.

[2] "The early progenitors of man must have been once covered with hair, both sexes having beards; their ears were probably pointed, and capable of movement; and their bodies were provided with a tail, having the proper muscles . . . the foot was then prehensile . . . and our progenitors, no doubt, were arboreal in their habits . . . the males had great canine teeth."—"Descent of Man," p. 160. "Finally, then, as far as we can judge, the tail has disappeared in man and the anthropomorphous apes, owing to the terminal portion having been injured by friction during a long lapse of time; the basal and imbedded portion having been reduced and modified, so as to become suitable to the erect, or semi-erect position."—*Ibid.*, p. 60.

spirit having seized upon Darwinism, his system became a serviceable argument in support of materialistic doctrines. Transformism is taken for granted as having been scientifically demonstrated, and as necessarily implying atheism. "The doctrine of transformism," says Professor Broca, "easily attracts to itself all minds impatient of the restraint of dogmas."[1] It would be difficult to show more distinctly that passion, rather than true science, is taken as the guide of men; that we are no longer dealing with a question of system, but of an *a priori* argument brought forward to meet the exigencies of a preconceived opinion.

In examining the causes of the transformations alleged by Darwin, we will allow competent scientific naturalists to speak.[2] We shall find that, in their eyes, these causes are by no means sufficiently proved. First, then, what are we to think of the struggle for life or vital antagonism? No doubt the struggle for life goes on—less violently in the vegetable and animal kingdoms, however, than among men, but still the struggle is a real one, in which the strong sometimes survive, the weak sometimes perish. But are these things to be regarded as perpetual, as Darwin supposes them to be? "Observation proves the exact contrary," says M. Blanchard, one of our most learned naturalists. "If the favouring circumstances of which certain animals have availed themselves are not sustained, their produce degenerates; if the scarcity destructive to others is made to cease, their young speedily repair the decay ensuing upon hard times. Amidst abundance, organisms tend to develop, but invariably according to their own types, and their specific character is not changed."[3] If we take account of the strife between the destroyers and their victims, observation shows that ordinary or weakly individuals escape just as well as the more robust. Lions and wolves do not select their prey. The chance finding of it decides the event. Weak organisms make up for want

[1] "Du Transformisme."

[2] "The Darwinian view is one due to incoherent thought and superficial inductions, made in the teeth of contrary evidence. It reposes, indeed, not on evidence, but on ignorance and a deplorable confusion of ideas. It will be effectually put an end to by a wide diffusion of knowledge as to what human speech and human intellect really are."—"On Truth," by St. George Mivart, Ph.D., M.D., etc., p. 524.

[3] "La vie des êtres animés," p. 134.

of power by flight or by stratagem. Opportunity, accident of time and place, and sexual ardour bring about sexual intercourse. The strongest do not always prevail. If that were the case, savages would always be increasing in stature, in strength, and in beauty. We know that such is not the case. Moreover, Darwin and his school overlook the chief cause for the perpetuation of the inferior species side by side with their hostile superiors, namely, their extraordinary fecundity. "Throughout nature," says M. Blanchard, "there exists a wonderful relative proportion between fecundity and the dangers environing it."[1] Seeds, insects, and fishes offer striking examples of this law of compensation. "Whilst, for instance, the sardine, the herring, and the cod produce eggs by millions, the ferocious shark has only two or three young at a time."[2] M. Gaudry endorses this opinion. "Animals the best endowed are sometimes the very ones which have first ceased to exist. The ammonite disappeared at the time of its most magnificent development. The belemnite, so common in the beginning of the cetaceous period, began to fall off towards the end of that period, we know not from what cause. Whilst delicate creatures lived on, the princes of the animal world disappeared, leaving no posterity. We find, then, that strength and fruitfulness have not always prevented the destruction of being."[3] In the *Revue Scientifique*[4] M. Gaudry writes to the same effect. In the preceding year, when presenting the Academy with a facsimile of the dinoceros, the fossil of a powerful animal of the tertiary strata, the Professor said—"The dinoceros was the largest of the mammifers of this epoch; but this monarch of the oceans had but an ephemeral reign, and seems to have died leaving no descendants. If what is termed the struggle for life had been the chief cause of survival, the dinoceros, as being the largest and best equipped, in other words, the fittest of his contemporaries, ought to have survived!" In the primary and secondary epochs many of the strongest animals disappeared, whilst the smaller and weaker ones,

[1] "La vie des êtres animés," p. 139.
[2] This is scarcely correct. Seventy-five eggs were taken from a shark captured near Brighton in 1882.
[3] "Les enchainements du monde animal."
[4] 1st March, 1890.

less well equipped, survived and perpetuated their race. From what cause do species living in the same surroundings and under the same conditions exhibit considerable morphological variations, having no influence in the struggle for life? How could fish, for example, fight for life, or even live at all, during the slow and gradual transformation of the organs of respiration, as their gills tended to become lungs? After these questions and difficulties, which might be indefinitely multiplied, it becomes impossible to decide with certainty that rivalry is the universal rule of progress. "You will not now find," says Romanes, the favourite disciple of Darwin, "a single cautious observer who maintains that the survival of the fittest can explain the formation of species."[1]

Darwin adds to rivalry the influence of natural selection, which, profiting by the smallest favourable variations, preserves them by the law of heredity, and accumulates them during thousands of ages. To establish this law Darwin paid great attention to artificial selection. He suggested, as examples, the numerous varieties of the domestic pigeon, and the astonishing diversities existing among these birds. But can it be justly affirmed that natural selection tended to produce these diversities, or even greater ones? Quite the contrary, for variations, left to themselves, are apt to return to the primitive type. "In the case of domestic animals," says M. Blanchard, "experiment is conclusive." Recent experiments made by M. Dareste overthrow the transformist hypothesis completely. This scientist made long studies upon the teratogeny of domestic fowls, owing to the facility of obtaining eggs at all times. He avows, with the sincerity of a true scientist, that, although he succeeded in causing some slight anomalies, he did not succeed in producing any great modifications such as would bring about the formation of either varieties or species.[2] This absolutely contradicts the transformist hypothesis. Natural selection brings back to the primitive type varieties that have branched off from it, not only in the animal but also in the vegetable kingdom, which is less rebellious against notable modifications.

[1] "Physiological Selection," 1889—*Journal of the Linnean Society.*
[2] "Recherches sur la production artificielle des monstruosités."

Natural selection, as the phrase denotes, develops useful organs because of their utility. But these organs must already exist if they are to be developed, and in a degree which admits of their being serviceable. It does not beget them. The rows of bone plates in the jaws of the whale, which serve to retain the small organisms taken into the mouth in the water, must be large and numerous. Natural selection cannot act upon them unless they have already these two qualities, without which they would be of no service. Similarly, in order that the giraffe may be able to browse upon leaves of lofty trees, a long neck is indispensable. If that part of the body had been short, and consequently useless for the end in view, natural selection would have tended to lengthen it. Besides, according to M. Blanchard, the law of sexual selection is continually contradicted by the indifferent unions between individuals of superior quality and others that are inferior. Then what of the almost universal sterility of hybrids? These creatures never reproduce themselves naturally without artificial crossing. Their sterility, according to M. Blanchard and M. Quatrefages, amounts to a fundamental law of nature. But for that law nature would become a seething mass of incoherent and changing forms. "Expunge from the earth the natural law preventing the intermixture of species," says M. Quatrefages, "and see what confusion would ensue. I cannot describe what the result would be. After a few generations, what we now call genera, families, orders, and classes would all have disappeared, and their collaterals would speedily follow suit. Many centuries would not have passed before the animal and the vegetable kingdoms would be found in the most utter disorder. But order has existed in the one and in the other from that epoch when the first organised beings came to inhabit the solitudes of this earth. They could not have established themselves nor have lasted but for the law preventing the intermixture of species."[1] Were it otherwise, hybrids would be numerous, and naturalists would have no difficulty in observing new species in process of formation or restoration. Lastly, if natural selection always acted for the benefit of the individual, why should certain insects and birds be attired in

[1] "L'espèce humaine," Chap. xi., p. 76.

brilliant colours, which make them conspicuous to their enemies? Why does the stag bear branching antlers, often irritating to him, and, at best, but poor weapons of defence? Why is the shark obliged to turn upon its back in order to seize its prey? Why has the cock a clarion voice, which inspires no terror, but points him out to the fox? Why is the bee's sting barbed, and, therefore, incapable of being extricated by it from the wound it makes, thus causing the bee's own death? Why does not selection eliminate the rudimentary organs of certain animals which are no longer of any use to them? Are we not told that the office of natural selection is to eliminate the superfluous and develop that which is useful? This effect of selection would be admirable if it did not, alas! so often fail to produce it. *Quandoque bonus.* With regard to the correlation of types, this is an established certainty, but it is a refutation of Darwinism. When organisation is seen to be the outcome of the Creator's design, the correlation of the divers parts of the whole explains itself. But when, according to Darwin, all manner of species have come from a primitive type, without any pre-determining law, their organisation is no more than the result of blind chance, and so the correlation of types can only be, according to Darwin, utter nonsense.[1] To maintain that blind forces left to themselves could, apart from design, cause the most wonderful combinations of organism, is to maintain a contradictory proposition. What are we to say about the transforming effects of climate and environment? As to the influence of climate, that complex factor made up of agents called light, heat, moisture, and electricity, M. Blanchard remarks—"We should err in believing this to be a phenomenon of large effect. The lion is found throughout Africa, Asia Minor, Persia, and India, but it remains a lion. Naturalists acknowledge varieties in this species, but they are limited to the colour of the hide and the fulness of the mane. The royal tiger inhabits the jungles of Java, Sumatra, and India; it is found in the north of China, Mangolia, in

[1] "In what manner the mental powers were first developed in the lowest organisms is as hopeless an inquiry as how life itself first originated. These are problems for the distant future, if they are ever to be solved by man."—"Descent of Man," p. 66.

Siberia, as far as Lake Baikal, and is, therefore, subjected to extremes of temperature, yet its variations are but slight. The wolf and the fox are the same animals in all respects, from the torrid zone to the glacial regions. Birds, which are scattered over the greater part of the Old World, evince no tendency to transformism."[1] Virchow admits that climate and external circumstances are apt to act upon the organism, but nothing proves that these factors have given birth to any particular species, or even to a well-defined variety.[2] He remarked some time before—"As for transformism, one seldom sees a great problem treated so lightly, not to say stupidly.[3]

Adaptation to environment takes place. It is the basis of horticulture and agriculture, but within limits that call for the continued intervention of man. If this intervention be suspended, plants fall back to their original types. As a general rule, according to M. Blanchard, the theory of environment is contradicted by the fact that, beings possessing in themselves the necessary conditions for protecting them against surrounding dangers do not lose these protecting conditions at all when the dangers have ceased, whilst species are seen to die out when transplanted into an unsuitable environment in which they are not able to become acclimated. The history of every lost species teaches us this. Do we find that the huge wingless birds of New Zealand and of other western islands, which have perished at the hands of the natives because they could not fly away, developed wings which would have enabled them to escape from their exterminators? Will not the bison shortly disappear in North America as agriculture becomes more and more extended? By the side of these numerous disappearances of species we find no real instance of transformation, nor even the production of a single new species. Some unimportant variations are found, but no complete transformations. These variations barely assume the character of permanence or advancement. Many of them are examples of retrogression, such as the loss of sight in fish found in subterranean lakes, and at great

[1] "Descent of Man," p. 97.
[2] Congrés des Anthropologistes Allemands, 1889.
[3] *Ibid.*, 1884.

ocean depths. We may also cite the state of degradation of many savage human races. Certain functions are much more easily lost than acquired. When the conditions of environment grow too diversified for a living being it dies, but does not become transformed. Surroundings are not, therefore, so efficaciously modifying as they have been declared to be. M. Godron, who notices especially the variations that vegetables can undergo, tells us—"A great number of plants are spread everywhere in countries widely apart and in climates greatly diversified; nevertheless, they preserve the natural characters that distinguish them."[1] De Candolle and Brogniart say the same thing. M. Vilmorin, too, in his great work upon leguminous plants, writes thus—"We see species that have been cultivated from before historic times exposed to all the modifying influences which attend upon the constant recurrence of sowing, such as their transfer from one country to another, and the most marked changes in the character of their environment; yet these species always preserve their distinct character, and never overpass the limits that keep them apart from other nearly related species." Agassiz makes the same statement concerning shells. Twenty-seven thousand shells, all differing a little from one another, presented the distinct characteristics of one and the same species. Barande decides in the same way concerning fossils. Out of three hundred and fifty species of trilobites he found only ten trivially diversified, but he could not discover any permanent specific form.

Nevertheless, we readily allow that there are certain facts that favour transformism. A denial of this would amount to ignorance; to ignore it would not be to our liking. But it is easy to show that we can draw no conclusions from such facts against the normal rule, and that opposing facts are far more numerous and much more certain.

The Transformists exhibit first the unity of design in the great natural groups, and even throughout the entire organic kingdom; which unity alone accounts for the presence in certain species of rudimentary and useless

[1] "De l'espèce."

organs corresponding to the serviceable organs of other species. Thus, they say, the bird's wing and the fin of the fish are inserted in the same place that the arm occupies in man, and contain the same essential parts. So also the two lateral toes in the hog and the single one in the horse are useless. The Transformists tell us these parts say—"Here we are; we struggled for life and have conquered; we are witnesses to a past which is no more." The Transformists point out, again, the successive appearances through geological periods of types more and more perfect; molluscs, fishes, batrachians, reptiles, with birds and marsupials, hoofed mammifers, carnivora, with the apes, and, last of all, man. They lay stress, again, upon embryonic transformations, which exhibit man first as a fish, then as a reptile. Inferior species are due only to arrested development. They lastly call to our notice the analogy of successive fauna in the same region. From these evidences Transformists conclude that species are only determinate families. They deny both the absolute stability of these and the existence in each one of an intrinsic and essential principle of distinction.

But these decisions are not proved. The fixity of species is, on the other hand, a fact of experience and observation.

Unity of design is the resemblance which causes the approximation between certain beings of the same group by certain fundamental features, fewer in number in proportion to the vastness of the group. It is difficult to imagine an absence of this tie of resemblance. There is no living body without tissues suitable for the general phenomenon of vegetable existence. In like manner there is no animal without mobility and sensibility, with the organic characters essential to those functions. And, besides, we judge that the Creator willed to expand unity into variety, only modifying the general plan in the measure necessary for the particular plan, and only touching it, so to speak, superficially. Accordingly, it is often seen that this object is attained by the simple multiplication, combination, retrenchment, or development of similar parts. This is the teaching of the great school of Cuvier, which Agassiz has so perfectly elaborated. For naturalists of this school the

resemblance, more or less perfect, between one species of animals and another in no way determines that they proceed from a common ancestor. The similarity of arrangement between the bones of a man's hand, the wing of the bat, the fin of the dolphin, and the leg of the horse, in no way proves the theory of modified descent.[1] Such resemblances and differences are explained by admitting that animal and vegetable organisation was not blindly produced, but, on the contrary, that it is the handiwork of an intelligent power, which, in order to display its wisdom more fully, has produced forms infinitely varied, and yet fashioned upon the same unique fundamental design. In this manner we should have, according to naturalists, four chief fundamental types for the whole animal kingdom, and the varying branches of the vertebrates would all depend upon the highest types. For the rest, to deduce the existence of a common origin from the unity of design pre-supposes that particular arrangements are purely accidental, and that they are derived by simple modification from the general system. But this is very difficult to maintain. In a purely natural group, the vertebrates for example, the diversities often appear like multiplications or substitutions, which convey no idea of any gradual transformation; and, besides, is it not vain to attempt to reduce the characteristic arrangements of great branches to one very general plan? We can state, then, of the rudimentary organs, that their presence is explained by the simple introduction of a secondary and particular plan into that which is fundamental and general. The particular design does not disturb the common parts of the general structure, except in so far as they may be incompatible with it. In some cases it entirely obliterates certain features, in others it allows them to subsist as if it were to be evidential. For example, the hinder limbs are entirely suppressed in the whale. The serpent has no limbs. In flowers, which are irregular, the stamina owe their abortion to a combination of axile symmetry with a basis of dorso-ventral symmetry. By the total suppression of a part a void would be the result

[1] As regards the horse, it should be proved that the actual horse is really the offspring of the hyparion, and that its pastern is only caused by atrophy of the two lateral toes of the hyparion progressively become useless.

destructive to the harmony and perhaps to the proper development of the whole.

The geological evolution of forms is explained by the variety and growing perfection of the circumstances which have permitted the successive appearances of aerial animals and of the superior orders of mammifers. But this progress has not resulted in accordance with the rules of transformism. From the outset, and in most of the classes, we find highly developed organisms. Thus the crustaceous trilobites, the cephalopod mulluscs now so debased, the labarinthodont batrachians, the cryptogamous and gymnospermous vegetables, are very perfectly organised. If the higher orders have by degrees supplanted the lower ones, we very seldom can perceive a genealogical lien between the later appearances and their forerunners. The mammifers (whales and bats) take the places of reptiles of similar habits (enaliosaurians and pterodactyls). The phanerogamous angiosperms come after the cryptogamous and gymnosperms, without intervening transitional forms. The ammonites and belemnites, which are always found in the secondary strata, of which they are characteristic fossils, disappeared at a particular period. Species, like individuals, come to the end of their existence.

The stages of the higher being in its embryonic development bear only a vague and purely negative resemblance to certain lower types. The embryo at first develops the general characteristics. The vertebrate comes before the mammifer, the mammifer precedes the man. But lower forms, from the imperfection of their design, change the common characteristics less. And so the fish or the reptile keeps in its adult stage certain features found in man in his earliest development. This has produced the illusion we dispel. After this first development, the really special traits of the fish or the reptile are absent, and in their stead we have the first lineaments of the human type. Otherwise, as M. de Nadaillac said, from the same cell could proceed indifferently "a dog or a frog, a man or a chicken."[1] The destiny of every being from the time of the fecundation of its germ is fixed irrevocably. Because, indeed, there is

[1] Congrès de Bruxelles, September, 1894.

found in the germ a fixed principle, which differentiates it from all other living things.

The analogy of successive fauna in one and the same region is not so constant as it might be. If on the one hand it indicates transformation within the same class, or rather within the same order, on the other it tells against the passage from one order to another. It rather unfolds the design of the Creator, who has impressed on the population of each region a particular stamp in harmony with the climate and other more or less persistent circumstances. In like manner, if we study the fossil flora, the survey of from eight to ten thousand paleozoic species demonstrates that these various forms did not appear simultaneously at the beginning of things, but successively, either singly or in groups; that they passed away in like manner; and thereafter the flora has been several times renewed in its entirety. But this event does not imply any real likelihood of an actual derivation of species. The evidence is very incomplete. Herbaceous plants are almost wholly wanting during the entire geological series. As to arborescent vegetables, they hardly ever present, at least in a condition capable of being examined, their essential organs, such as their flowers and fruits. Moreover, the differences observed between two succeeding floras in the same locality are the result of migration, and not of evolution.

Thus, in applying the fundamental principle of evolution, namely, that every like characteristic denotes a common origin, this consequence follows, that a germ or unique elementary organism must have preceded all other organised beings. For, if we admit at the outset the appearance of a number, more or less great, of primitive ancestors, each one of these would originate an independent series dissimilar from the rest, and we should thus find ourselves once more in the presence of those absolutely fixed species which we were endeavouring to eliminate. Indeed, as all the existing organisms—even the most dissimilar ones—"possess in common numerous morphological and physiological characteristics," these characteristics being no longer the indication of a common origin, the fundamental principle of the theory of

evolution is reduced to nothing. We arrive at the vicious circle in our reasoning.[1]

There is no regular method of argument from the general to the particular, or from the confused to the distinct. Such increasingly general types as formed the links in the chain of descent are found to be of very limited number as we trace them in geological order. The known species of apes, existing or extinct, could only be the collaterals of man, being differentiated and marked out in a manner incompatible with common ancestry. The nearest common ancestor of man and known apes would be some unknown primate.[2] Thence we should have to go, by leaps and bounds, to the marsupial, reptile, fish, and other forms. Where can we find the true ancestral type apart from such awkward differentiation? These types, without complete and specifically perfect organs, could be nothing more than mythical. The countless intermediary links belong to the region of hypothesis. Haeckel admits that the division of the genealogy furnished by paleontology stands to the whole hypothesis in the ratio of 1 to 100,000!

So far no traces have been met with of any incomplete being, lacking perfection in its genus, and in course of becoming completed. M. Alf. Gaudry, who has devoted so much labour to the propagation of this opinion, although he shows in his "Enchainements" that among organic species there are groups singularly allied, is obliged to admit, in treating of the fauna of secondary times, that—"We perceive numerous evidences of connections which cause us to think that in one and the same class there were transitions from species to species, from family to family. Can we go any further than this? Do we find proof that in any division animals of different classes have passed from one class to another? I have already proposed this question in my treatise on primary beings, and have been constrained to answer it in the negative." And elsewhere he says—What are those ancestors out of which the beings have proceeded, which diverged into our different classes?

[1] See Le Rapport de l'Abbè Boulaye au congrès de Bruxelles, 1894.

[2] "Man is descended from some lower form, notwithstanding that connecting links have not hitherto been discovered . . . man is the co-descendant with other mammals of some *unknown* lower form."—"Descent of Man," p. 146.

We do not know. Certainly we should be pleased if we did not find so many breaks in the chain, and if we could better understand the synthesis of the organic world. But science is still too young. As labourers in the first hour of the day, we can only see dimly into the future of the magnificent tableau of nature, wherein everything is co-ordinated, interpenetrated, and linked together through all the ages and in all space under the Divine Architect's direction."[1] M. Blanchard tells us in the preface of his book, "Etres Animés"—"Having been thrown at an early age into contact with the vast collections of the Museum of Natural History, and compelled by my official duties to undertake the classification and arrangement of an enormous portion of those collections, I had to study the species of all countries, to examine them in their variations, and to follow them in their geographical distribution. Therefore, with all possible earnestness would I, at the beginning of this book, assure every friend of natural science that I should like to be shown a single example of transformation in any species!"[2] Such an example has not yet been discovered! We find in all classes disjointed resemblance, but complete absence of intermediate forms. As far as we can go in natural history and paleontology, we observe differences of species in the animal and in the vegetable worlds. The description which Aristotle gives of the different kinds of animals in Greece and Asia applies as exactly to the individuals now represented as to those described by him two thousand years ago. We see the greyhound and the terrier in scenes sculptured on the tomb of Roti, a famous Egyptian hunter of the 12th dynasty. We find a mastiff carved on a bas-relief found among the ruins of Babylon, which resembles unmistakably the mastiff of the 19th century. Ibises and crocodiles, the mummies of which are so numerous in Egypt, are in all respects the same as the ibises and crocodiles of to-day. The sculptures of the Troglodytes represent animals the same as those we know so well. The bones in our oldest caves, the shells of Solutré, or of the grottoes of Vézère or Niagara, the rock polypi of the Gulf of Mexico, the oysters and spring lobsters of the

[1] *Revue Scientifique*, 1st March, 1890.
[2] Preface, p. 15.

tertiary epoch, show no differences, after so long an interval, from similar species known now. The same is true of plants. The yew, the birch, the sycamore, the oak, and the hazel, found at Robenhausen in a deposit of lignite, accumulated in the interval between two glacial periods, resemble the existing species. The ferns found in the coal measures are like those of our gardens and woods. The herbarium of Dr. Swinfürth in the Cairo Museum contains flowers found in the tomb of Amenophis I. of the 18th dynasty. They do not differ from the actual flowers of modern Egypt. "The animals, plants, and seeds hidden in the pyramids of Egypt are again the animals and plants living still on the banks of the Nile."[1]

From this point of view there is nothing more pronouncedly against the system of evolution than the admissions of M. Karl Vogt, the illustrious naturalist. Speaking of the two divisions which compose the history of the organic world, Phyllogeny, which is the history of the series of species from their origin, and Ontogeny, which traces the development of single specimens, he has the boldness to say—"These are dogmas, which are as generally maintained in theory as they are denied in practice." And he goes on to prove their falsity. First, to establish phyllogeny, there must be shown an uninterrupted series of organic forms through all time, beginning with the earliest and simplest ones; but, unfortunately, one of the most learned of the Transformists, M. Lang, allows that "the phyllogenic descent of no species is known to us." "This is the exact truth," adds Vogt. The poor remains that we possess belong almost exclusively to the last chapter; but the first chapters, infinitely more important in this vast work, have been irretrievably lost. M. Vogt confirms, by a multitude of facts, these statements, which come so strangely from a Darwinian. Whence do the vertebrates originate, of which the organisation is so perfect? Transformists assert that they were derived from simpler forms, the annelids or worms, or else from the molluscs and zoophites. And as the ascidians present in the condition of larvæ nervous ganglions, resembling in shape the dorsal spine, these may be the source of the

[1] Gaudry, "Enchainements," preface.

vertebrates! "This is an error worthy of tyros," exclaims Vogt, "a blunder that one allows to pass in silence nowadays." These beings are only retrograde types, and nothing can be ascertained as to their relation to the vertebrates. It has also been supposed that the vertebrates were evolved from annelids. "I must confess," says Vogt, "that I could not attempt to demonstrate this to any one, and I should be ridiculous were I to constitute it a truth to be universally believed." Again, as to the mammifers, the most perfect of the vertebrates, where do they come from? "I ask myself," says Vogt, "from what ancient forms do they descend? and, in no case in the present state of knowledge, can I conjecture even an hypothetical pedigree for them." Views, showing the utmost disparity, are before us. It is in presence of the conflict of opposing theories that we are peremptorily told that "the series of man's progenitors is proved by an unbroken chain"! Ontogeny is the second "pillar of brass" in the Darwinian edifice. By it we are informed that "the existing superior organisms reproduce, in their evolution, the whole series of the varied forms of their ancestors." "Common sense," says Vogt, "will hardly allow us to admit that a history which is being unfolded before our eyes is the recapitulation of another history of which nothing is known. Have we not shown that we do not know the full history of any species whatever? Let him that readeth understand"! M. Vogt adds, giving citations in support of his views, that "naturalists no longer admit the parallel between the phases of the individual and the series of ancestral forms. It is even declared that it is impossible to admit it." He concludes by saying—"If the dogmatic statement I oppose is but a mere tottering construction which threatens to fall to pieces, it does not follow that the whole church of Darwin has been built solely of air, vapour, and mist. Careful examination reveals the origin of the myth."[1] Thus the foundations of Darwinism are shown to be weak. The evidence of this which has been adduced should suffice.[2]

To complete the demonstration, we may notice the differ-

[1] *Revue Scientifique*, ii., 23rd May and 13th June, 1891.
[2] See also Professor St. George Mivart's "Genesis of Species," "Man,

ences and the contradictions which have arisen among the most learned supporters of the new theories. This is pointed out by M. de Quatrefages—"You have satisfied yourselves that the term transformism does not designate a definite doctrine, but only a vague opinion which is translated into the varying conceptions that are often distinctly contradictory. By the side of Lamarck, Darwin, and Haeckel, who maintain the doctrine of transformism as having been accomplished slowly during the lapse of centuries, you find Geoffroy Saint Hilaire, Owen, and Mivart, who recognise only such transformations as are sudden and complete. Against Lamarck, who attributes transformation to habits caused by the wants and desires of the animal, you find Darwin and all his disciples attributing the phenomenon to natural selection, necessitated by the struggle for existence; Pomalius and Buffon find its cause exclusively in the action of environment. Lamarck upholds the constant mobility of types; while Bory de Saint Vincent and M. Naudin maintain their progressive consistency. Darwin, on one side, makes all applications of his theory depend upon the two great laws of divergence and permanent characterisation; Vogt, on the other hand, lays stress on the action wrought by convergence and progressive effacement of types. Darwin, and most of his followers, maintain that animals progress continually; Huxley proves the permanence of types, and Vogt pronounces for the degradation of many of them. This will suffice to show the difficulties involved by transformism when it relates to animals. The same thing is true of its attempts to deal with the descent of man. Darwin,[1] Haeckel, and their school provide us with ape-like ancestors,

Apes, and Half-Apes," and the numerous other works from the pen of that talented scientist, for whom Darwin entertained the greatest respect, modifying several of his opinions out of deference to Dr. Mivart's exposures of the fallacies underlying them.

[1] "The quadrumana, and all the higher mammals, are probably descended from an ancient marsupial animal, and this through a long line of diversified forms, from some amphibian-like creature, and this again from some fish-like animal. In the dim obscurity of the past we can see that the early progenitor of all the vertebrata must have been an aquatic animal, provided with branchiæ, with the two sexes united in the same individual, and with the most important organs of the body (such as the brain and heart) imperfectly, or not at all, developed. This animal seems to have been more like the larvæ of the existing marine ascidians than any other known form."—"Descent of Man," p. 609.

creatures of high development of the catarrhine order,[1] and with or without caudal appendage. Vogt and Huxley deduce both man and ape from a common ancestor, who was neither the one nor the other, but akin to both. Haeckel has drawn up an original and detailed genealogy of man. We have heard of the censures, as incisive as they are severe, pronounced by Vogt on this array of hypotheses. We recall only the main points that divide the school of evolutionists. Their differences are more pronounced when we descend to matters of detail. The question of the origin of the first vertebrate raised a perfect storm in Germany; the Darwinians were split up into two parties—one disputed in favour of molluscs, the other in favour of worms. Furthermore, all these diverse opinions appeal to the same arguments, viz., personal conviction, possibility, chance, and the action of the unknown. Would such appeals be regarded as worthy of the name of proof in physics, chemistry, or physiology? Certainly not. An anthropologist, then, has the right to refuse to admit them. Therefore I reject them." [2]

The transformist thesis proceeds by analogies, and has not passed beyond the stage of hypothesis. It has lost much of its early popularity. Scientific discoveries are constantly rendering it more and more doubtful; it has no established facts to give us; and a great number of investigations contradict it. We have listened to its advocates because they are genuine scientists, indeed have been anxious to hear them. They have at least shown that transformism is opposed to one ascertained fact: the isolation of specific groups reaching back to the first ages of history, and the maintenance of the general organic framework through all the revolutions occurring in the globe. It was a noble ambition to try to cast the whole universe in the mould of one formula! But let this be thoroughly carried out, and not allowed to remain enveloped in perpetual hypotheses.

Then, what have the partisans of the theory done? They have fallen back upon the statements that (1) the forty or sixty centuries to which historical evidence extends are

[1] The apes of the Old World are called catarrhine, those of the New are platyrhine.

[2] "Leçon de cloture" (Cours d'anthropologie au Muséum, 1890).

but an imperceptible fraction of the millions of years demanded for the evolution of the oldest organisms; (2) paleontology has but scanty information upon fossil remains; (3) the hope has not been abandoned of finding the intermediate forms, which, so far, are wanting. We acknowledge with the transformists the length of the ages which have passed away; but even from this point of view, we must always come to the moment when species, the issue of a common ancestry, naturally productive among themselves, lost their fecundity. The apparition of reciprocal infecundity is the problem that must be solved. So long as proof is not forthcoming, we are condemned to hypothesis. Another point evolutionists require for transformations so deep seated is the lapse of "millions of ages"; but correct geological science refuses to grant them.[1] It is vain to excuse the yawning chasms in evolution by stating that only a small part of the terrestrial superficies has been explored by geologists. This absence of evidence is more apparent than real. Recent explorations confirm, more frequently than they supplement, the series, almost entirely known already, of sedimentary deposits, and rarely add to the ascertained lists of organic races any type of real importance. Paleontological discoveries are always bringing to light new intermediate forms which furnish abundant argument against transformism, by demonstrating the sudden leaps, instead of gradual transformations, by which perfect forms arose. The transitions between the types of each region should naturally be drawn from the soil of that region. But certain regions, such as Europe, have been too often explored to leave any reasonable hope of further discovery. Then, we may object, the hope of more complete means of demonstration in the future is but poor ground on which to build up a vast new scientific system. It is surely unscientific to found a system, not upon what is already known, but upon what may some day be discovered; in other words, upon conjecture. Transformism will never be more than a superb hypothesis, admitted as true by certain savants, who wish to consider the notion of creation as *extra, præter*, or rather

[1] See "Notions de Géologie," par M. Raingeard, prêtre de Saint Sulpice, Chap. xv., 3rd edition.

anti-scientific. The primitive beings which form the only real evidences have retired into nothingness. The paleological layers have been explored throughout the world, but in these so-called "archives of nature," the very pages that are wanting are precisely those that are indispensable. Future beings that might confirm the theory are too remote from us to render us any assistance. We see how much restriction the discussion of this problem imposes. In undertaking it, we must not look for the solution of difficulties in the brilliant, but often sterile, conceptions of metaphysicians, or in the vague generalities of scientists. Realities and facts alone must direct us. We must examine alleged discoveries, determine, and compare them, following the only reasonable method in this kind of inquiry, viz., that of experiment.

If it is untrue that transformism has been scientifically proved, it is also untrue that, if proved, "it would necessarily involve the acceptance of atheism as a consequence." The evolutionary theory could readily be made to embrace both spiritualism and revelation. Allowing that this system could attain the triumph it hopes for over the strong objections that oppose it, it would not destroy belief in the future life, provided it did not overstep the just limits of scientific conclusions, by confounding the question of the manner how with that of the reason why. The influence of certain laws has been exaggerated by Darwinism. Darwin has done good service to science by making its action better known. It is certain that vital antagonism exists which hinders life from being multiplied without limit in its most elementary manifestations. The struggle for existence goes on; it even becomes a source of energy. It is true that heredity, environment, the stimulus of want, and the exercise of certain organs have a modifying effect on living beings, but their most real influence is to bring them to realise more perfectly their own types, the controlling force of which is their *raison d'etre*. In presence of this system, the teachings of philosophy and the Bible remain intact, provided there is no attempt to force evolution to include man. Still, there is always the need for an explanation of the appearance, at a certain epoch, of the first germs of life. To the question—

Whence come they? physical and natural science can give no answer. Philosophy and Religion reply—"By divine creation." Darwin, as we have remarked, does not refuse to admit a primordial creation.[1] If we say, with the transformists, that rudimentary beings, by a series of transformations, produced all living things, it must be allowed that these transformations must have ensued according to determinate laws. Darwinism explains the development of existence in the universe by evolution, subject to certain rules. Evolution is, for Darwin, inseparable from the notion of progress. It is by progress that it unfolds one being from another; it proceeds from the less to the greater; it always tends to improvement. What is this, but to state that it follows a definite plan? For what is "the better" cannot be known if we suppress intelligence in nature. Spiritual philosophy then raises no objection to this view. Evolution is only an extension of the Leibnitzian dynamism, according to which God, in creating beings, constituted in them the law of development. Darwinism has, moreover, been accepted by some believers in the supernatural, as may be seen in the work of Robert Wallace on "Natural Selection," where he establishes the proposition that natural selection implies finality as much as does the theory of successive creations. Several of the most illustrious transformists strongly repudiate the idea of evolution without God. Herbert Spencer maintains a belief in the reality of a first objective cause. "There is a truth which must ever become more clear, that there exists an inscrutable Being, everywhere manifest, of whom we can conceive neither the beginning nor the end. We are in the presence of an infinite and eternal Force, whence all things proceed.[2] M. Gaudry concludes his "Enchaînements

[1] "The question of belief in God is of course wholly distinct from that higher one, whether there exists a Creator and Ruler of the universe; and this has been answered in the affirmative by some of the highest intellects that have existed."—"Descent of Man," p. 94.

[2] "Principles of Sociology." But this definition involves a contradiction, and is more "dogmatic" than the theistic hypothesis. According to Herbert Spencer it is (1), a truth that an inscrutable Being exists; (2), that this truth must become more clear; (3), that this Being is everywhere manifest; (4), that His beginning and end are alike inconceivable; (5), that He is an infinite and eternal Force; and (6), that all things proceed from Him. And yet Mr. Spencer claims that the being of God cannot be either affirmed or denied, for He is unknown and unknowable. Surely this is dogmatism worthy, not of the scientist, but of the bigot.

du monde animal" by expressing admiration of "the magnificent display of nature, where, under the direction of the divine Artist, all is co-ordinated through time and space." In England, Lord Kelvin, Professor Stokes, Sir William Siemens, Tait, and Stewart have all protested against Evolution without God. Stewart says—"We affirm, as absolutely evident, the existence of God, the Creator and Preserver." Tait adds—"When the notions and vague speculations of Materialists and Agnostics are deprived of their emphatic form, the eyes of unthinking persons, who had confidently accepted their theories, are opened, and they are then ready to cry out with Titania—"Methought I was enamoured of an ass." Sir Richard Owen, who is recognised as the English Cuvier, and one of the greatest naturalists of our times, declares that "organic changes take place in accordance with the laws fixed beforehand by the All-seeing and Almighty Being, who has conferred upon the organisms their tendency to transformation." In Germany, Ed. de Hartmann, savant and pessimist, wrote not long since—"The progress in organisms could only exist by force of a determinate plan and a directing impulse." M. Risley laid down recently, in a review devoted to transformism, the causes of variations in organised beings, and concluded thus—"It appears to me that the proofs of design in nature are overwhelming; a cosmos, wherein everything has been produced by blind chance, is inconceivable. There remains, then, but one alternative. We are brought to the conviction that the causes of evolution depend definitely upon one infinite first cause, and that the theory of evolution is in no way destructive of the idea of a Creator."[1] The doctrine of evolution had its representatives in the Middle Ages among celebrated theologians. Transformism itself, in the shape given to it by Darwin, had the right of privilege in Catholic schools, and public expositions of its theories entailed no rebuke on those who delivered them. It was enough that evolutionists, who wished to be regarded as Catholics, held in respect two essential dogmas—(1), the primitive creation of the universe; and (2), the special intervention of the Creator in bestowing upon

[1] *Revue Scientifique*, 26th September, 1891.

man a soul endowed with reason and destined for immortality. In truth, in the eyes of the Church, an Intelligent Cause would appear not less admirable for having implanted in nature a principle of development, including within itself its future progress, rather than employ frequent interventions for the enrichment of organic life, according to a well-expressed saying of Leibnitz—"Why should it be against reason that the word *Fiat*, having left something behind it, namely, Beings, the not less admirable word, *Benedixit*, should have left after it in those Beings the endowments of fecundity and the virtue of organisation?"[1] Standing alone, Evolution is a barrier to thought. Behind it is hidden the "Unknowable," that ill-defined force and mysterious source whence such impulsive energy issues forth. Taken together with God the Creator forming the first organisms, with God ordering all things and directing their successive modifications according to a definite plan to be carried out, transformism becomes a possible theory. It affords a sublime notion of the power and wisdom of God. "The transformist doctrine leaves untouched the argument in favour of design, and consequently of the Designer."[2]

III.

Evolutionism, thus understood, is not, then, contrary to the principles of faith. But we cannot follow it when it includes man in the evolution of living beings, and assigns to him a brute origin—*Cette promotion me laisse un peu rêveur!* said Victor Hugo.[3] How does science endeavour to prove the descent of man from the beast? It does one thing only: it shows the striking analogies between animals and man. Physically, the brute enjoys all that man possesses. If there is found in man a principle higher than the body, why allow it to man and refuse it to the brute? There are in animals undoubted traces of intelligence. They foresee, they provide for the future, they resent injuries, they take opportunities of revenge, they organise themselves for

[1] "Théodicée."
[2] Lyell, "The Antiquity of Man."
[3] "Légende des siècles," 2e serie.

offence or defence, and they share in the lower faculties of man. This is matter of experience. Man is born and dies like the brute. The Book of Job declared that "there is but one end of man, and of the brute." In this sense man is but an animal, a little more perfect than his congeners. This caused M. Taine to say—"If it is not proved that man descends from the ape, he is at least his first cousin."

There is more of appearance than of reality in these relationships. Betwixt man and beast there is easily shown an essential difference that is impassable. There is a wide gap between the human skeleton and the skeleton of the known anthropoids, which are the "nearest relations of man," according to certain transformists. Huxley admits it. Man is a distinct type. His principal features, essentially distinct, are (1), his stature, naturally and perfectly upright, with such admirable anatomical dispositions as ensure that posture; (2), the difference between the hand and the foot, the latter giving him a firm step and the former a delicate organ of touch, the servant of his intellect; (3), and the attenuation of the bones of the face, and of the molar and canine teeth; (4), the difference is, above all, great between the brain of man and of the ape.[1] This difference was ascertained by the skilful anatomical investigations of Gratiolet—"The weight of the human brain is three times that of the best organised anthropoids."[2] This brain-volume markedly separates man from the ape. We note, further, the different arrangement of the cerebral convolutions and their inverse development, beginning in man in the anterior lobes, a probable indication of the seat of the intellectual functions. Man is also distinctly different from the ape by the formation of the base of the spine. The brute has a pelt; man has hair. How and when could these transformations have been produced? Such differences cannot be explained either by the action of environment or by the ape's efforts to satisfy a want. Anatomically, then, man is a separate being, distinct from all others.

The transformists urge that these changes are the

[1] "There can be no doubt that the difference between the mind of the lowest man and that of the highest ape is immense."—"Descent of Man," p. 125.
[2] "Topinard," p. 250.

products of an immeasurable course of ages. Hence the anthropological problem belongs to the question of tertiary man. This tertiary man has long been produced as the most difficult obstacle to the acceptance of revelation. Some twenty discoveries have, in turn, been alleged in his favour. Mention is made of chipped flints; bones, carved or bored; and even of human skeletons found in the pliocene formations. These discoveries have not stood the test of careful examination. The grooves in marrow-bones may well be the effect of the action of time. The indentations or incisions may have been made by workmen's tools, or more likely by the teeth of predacious animals. As to the implements of flint, such as various tools, spear heads, scrapers, knives, and arrow heads, we need not go to the anthropoids to account for them.[1] It is found that solar heat after a cold night, after frost, or even after a damp day, or the clashing together of boulders hurled along by a torrent, or, again, the chance blows of some hard, sharp body, would cause flints to split into the shapes found at Thénay. It is not necessary to have recourse to a blow to obtain percussion from flint. Pressure will produce it. We find what are termed "flint implements" even in the depths of the eocene, or lower strata, at an epoch long before the superior mammifers had appeared at all. There could be no question then of the existence of man, or of the supposed anthropoid of Mortillet, previously invented by Haeckel at that epoch. For the rest, nothing is more improbable, according to the laws of paleontology, than the existence or persistence of the highest organised beings among the early mammifers found, whose successive extinctions suffice to prove several types before the appearance of man. The miocene, still so

[1] M. de Mortillet explains, in a ridiculous manner, the reason for the existence of cut flints. "Ancestral man felt irritation in his furry skin. Instead of scratching himself, he lighted a fire to split the flints, which he then fashioned to his wants"—an explanation both absurd and unworthy of scientific men. Darwin thus accounts for them—"In all parts of Europe, as far east as Greece, in Palestine, India, Japan, New Zealand, and Africa, including Egypt, flint tools have been discovered in abundance, and of their use the existing inhabitants retain no tradition. There is also indirect evidence of their former use by the Chinese and ancient Jews. Hence there can hardly be a doubt that the inhabitants of these countries, which include nearly the whole civilised world, were once in a barbarous condition."—"Descent of Man," p. 145. Other authors arrive at a completely opposite conclusion, arguing from the existence of primitive flint implements to a very early civilisation which was universal.

much investigated, shows no trace of human remains anywhere, even at Thénay.[1] The flints, discovered in great masses of chalk, on which the tertiary seas beat, are scattered over a large surface, which shows no connection with any habitable place. They are particularly rude in form, and so small that one cannot see to what uses they could have been applied. All men of science, even those hostile to religion, have been divided as to any intentional fabrication of these implements. Indeed, to show the difficulty of attributing these objects to human labour, M. Herbert tells us that "the tertiary epoch was characterised by its interior lakes, which were immense wastes of shallow water, bounded by marshes." Now, it might easily happen, when man appeared during the quaternary epoch that he dwelt on the shores of these interior seas, that he traversed them in his canoes, that he dropped into them both his tools and the bodies of his dead. Such *débris* would now be recoverable, either in the shifting sands or in the chalks or the hardened deposits, according to the very variable character of the beds which marine waters form. Man may have inhabited those tertiary strata which still lie uppermost, their surface being covered only with thin accumulations. This is actually the case in Aquitaine, in several localities, where the beds of the old formations are very nearly level with the surface. Inhabiting thus a tertiary strata, man might have made excavations there for the burial of his own dead, as well as of the wild beasts killed in the chase.

These beds, or stratifications, in which discoveries have been made, should be proved to be deposits which have not been disturbed. But this has not been proved. We are always obliged to bear in mind, too, the incessant seismic phenomena to which the earth is liable. What shall we conclude from man's cave-dwellings or habitations erected upon piles in swamps? Are not such proceedings compatible with a certain measure of civilisation?[2] What conclusion can be drawn from the finding of human remains among those of the great mammifers of the tertiary epoch

[1] Loire-et-Cher. The Abbé Bourgeois found at Thénay in varying depths of the miocene strata cut flints, which he considered to have been fashioned by the hand of man.

[2] The Canary Islands provide instances of civilised cave-dwellers.

since those great mammifers survived in the quaternary epoch—in fact, up to an epoch relatively near to our own? Moreover, is it not probable that many sedimentary formations of the same nature as the tertiary deposits were simultaneous with the formation of the quaternary beds? This is the opinion of Vogt, Venturoli, and Bourgeois. "It is impossible," says M. de Nadaillac, "to classify strata as we classify books on the shelves of a library."

Furthermore, the theory of the "Three Ages," which evolutionists have invented, has been proved to be fallacious. It happens that during the researches made in the grotto of La Chévre, at Thorigne in Charny, flint implements, scarcely scratched, cut flints, and polished flints, as well as bronze and iron implements, were all found mixed together. At Preçy, engraved stones were found on the surface of the soil and fossils below, whilst at Saint Acheuil, the former were discovered at varying depths, some even underneath the fossil remains. At Solutré, as also in Asia Minor, M. Schliemann proves that carved bones were found in the lowest depths, then, ascending towards the surface, instruments of every kind, and of all kinds of articles of various materials, only less finished than those found at greater depths, "so that if there were movement it was retrograde." Theories concerning the different periods have no certainty; they often contradict one another. "The origin, date, and history of flints," says Fr. Valroger, "remain insoluble problems." "There is no such thing as an age of bronze or one of iron," says M. Arcelin, "but rather ages of stone, bronze, or iron, variable according to times and places."

Lastly, the granite rocks prove the existence of microscopic infusoria. The carboniferous formations include reptiles, leaves, fruits, and even delicate flowers. We find in other rocks the footprints of birds and of frail insects. But we do not find anywhere reliable traces of our own ancestry. We are shown the famous lower jaw of Moulin-Quignon. Sir Charles Lyell declares that the sand-beds where it was found are more than one hundred thousand years old. But M. Elie de Beaumont and Professor Philipps state, on the contrary, that the bed is of "quite recent formation." "I am obliged to say," M. Virchow tells us, "that even supposing the skulls of Cronstadt and Neanderthal

had been such as they are described, and that their geological position was clearly defined, they could not be held to constitute proof of the existence of an inferior primitive race which might be regarded as the link connecting the passage of the animal into the human being. It is folly to inquire for the missing link which would have united man to the ape or to some other animal."[1]

The hypothesis, then, of "any intelligent precursor of man" is useless; and the tertiary man, of whom so much was thought fifteen years ago, has now lost his prestige to a great extent. The question arises, Why is it that, having arrived at the present human type, the power of transformation comes to an end? Can we not conceive a being more perfect than man, even from the physiological point of view? Having attained the end, is it a law that now limits the action of forces hitherto in constant operation? But a law supposes a final cause, and all final causes are derisively rejected. If that ancestor of ours, with his furry coat, that *homo alatus* has been transformed into *homo sapiens*, this fact is a terrible blow to the principles of transformism. Evolution is believed to operate in the most advantageous sense. But what has our ancestor done? He has cast away his offensive and defensive weapons—his furry coat, his firm muscles, his formidable canines, and his long external ears. Either, then, the system is an illusion, or it is not applicable to man. Either our supposed ancestor managed to succeed by other means, or he has not had, like the other animals, to endure vital antagonism. But if this be the case, he is a distinct animal, and is, therefore, outside the hypothesis altogether.

We do not refuse to believe that the advent of man goes back to times relatively far distant. The time of man's appearance, in relation to dogma, is an open question. Our chronology, which unbelievers attack, is the last thing that we are anxious to defend. The two genealogical texts of the Bible whence the chronology is derived must be interpreted in the sense of a filiation. They cannot be used to determine the intervals of time between Adam and the Deluge nor between Noë and Abraham. And, besides, in their genealogies, the Easterns only followed the direct

[1] Virchow—Congress at Moscow, August, 1892.

line, without caring about intermediaries. The generations withheld sometimes involve centuries that cannot be computed.[1] There is, then, neither for the Deluge nor for creation any fixed date, and the Bible allows any duration of time that science may decide to assign both to man and to the earth. "It is an error to think," says Cardinal Meignan, "that the Catholic faith confines the existence of man within a term that cannot exceed six thousand years. The Church has never made any pronouncement upon the question, and her abstention from doing so is full of wisdom. Nothing certain has been revealed to us on that head."[2] "Biblical chronology," says M. le Hir, "is doubtful; human science must determine the date of the creation of our race."[3]

We must, then, conclude that we know nothing positive, either chronologically or morphologically, concerning primitive man. Man, as revealed to us by the bones found in many different parts of Europe and America, does not approach an animal ancestry in any respect. He differs in nothing from the man of historic times, or from ourselves in this nineteenth century. "Is it true that man lived in the tertiary epoch?" wrote the Abbé de Broglie. That fact is by no means certain. What is certain is, that during the quaternary epoch the existence of man on this earth is evident. Were those times necessarily anterior to the beginning of the high civilisations of the East, or to those of Egypt and Chaldea? The second question is not absolutely determined, although the affirmative is probable. But this matters little. What is beyond question is that science does not go back to the beginnings even of humanity. As the origin of life, so that of man is beyond it. The oldest skeletons of man are like those of these days, and the rude works of primitive industry display an intelligence similar to our own. Hence, the gradual transition from animals to man is not a scientific fact. It is a pure and simple hypothesis, having no other basis than

[1] *Genuit* does not always mean immediate descent. The Vulgate and the Hebrew text omit a Caiman mentioned in the Septuagint.

[2] "Le monde et l'homme primitif selon la Bible," p. 163.

[3] "Mélanges bibliques." Lord Kelvin has recently (June, 1897), declared that the earth cannot possibly have been capable of supporting organic life upon its surface for a longer period than thirty million years.

the voluntary choice made of it by science, unless indeed we adopt the metaphysical principle laid down by Haeckel, and say that "we must admit man to be a transformed animal, lest we be reduced to acknowledge the free intervention of a transcendental Cause." Was primitive man "a being absolutely savage, without any idea of morality or religion, knowing no family relation, and living as animals live"? This statement is also mere hypothesis. Beyond question, if it were only stated that primitive man possessed but a poorly-developed material civilisation, that he was only imperfectly acquainted with the laws of the physical universe, that his knowledge and industry were in their infancy, we should admit all that as sufficiently evident. But to declare that he was absolutely savage, is to pass beyond what is warranted by facts. "There are savages in our own days. This fact does not prove that human nature is savage; on the other hand, what historian of primitive times would pretend to be acquainted in every respect with the humanity of the early epochs, by means of the few monuments which we are able to discover?"[1] M. Nadaillac says—"I have often been asked to what epoch can we attribute the appearance of man on the earth? My answer is invariably this—In the present condition of science it is impossible to establish a precise date. As may have been seen in our previous works, anthropologists are greatly divided on the question of our knowledge at what moment man came, whether it was in Europe or in America. Some hold that he existed on both continents at the time of the great expansion of the glaciers; others, on the contrary, that he arrived after their disappearance. Then a third group decides that man may have lived both in Europe and America, during one of the periods of high temperature which took place in those times which have left their ineffaceable impression all over the globe.[2]

The result of this testimony, and of this discussion, is

[1] "Le prèsent et l'avenir du catholicisme en France," p. 121, etc. It is more probable that the existing races of savages have degenerated from a higher condition, than that civilised man is a production of a savage and untutored ancestry. In the traditions and customs of all the uncivilised races, there are traces of primitive civilisation, and remnants of primeval religion, and of the history of man's origin, common to all mankind. Certain civilisations, like the Chinese, have obscured these common primitive traditions.

[2] "L'homme," *Correspondant*, 25th October, 1892.

merely to prove that we do not know, and that we never shall know from science, any more than from history, the date of man's appearance on earth. Only the records of revelation, without determining the date, satisfy our inquiry, by teaching us *how* humanity came upon this earth, assuring us that its origin was not in any other animal species. All our positive knowledge concerning the origin of our race is known from the Bible alone.[1] Further, we do not understand the perplexities of those who are distressed by the statements of the high priests of free-thought on the questions of origin. These wise men know no more than we do. It is as hopeless to try to prove Materialism by geological discoveries as it is to prove the supernatural by them. I know one may try to prove a philosophy or a religion by disquisitions upon its historical monuments; or one may endeavour to weaken any one of its evidences by an appeal to history. But to make the rocks speak; the strata, the human remains, and the rude implements (the coarse implements, shall we say, of the savage or of primitive man?)—to make these things exclaim, like some fabulist, "I was there, therefore I know"; to make these things testify for or against religion is nothing but scientific fooling. There are races who are not tertiary men, but contemporaries of our own, who singularly resemble primitive man; such are the Fuegians and the natives of Tasmania. Hence we must perceive that in inquiries of this kind one can only make inductions, as variations in the guesses respecting the date of man's appearance made by the scientists. Some demand a hundred thousand years, others more, others less, in the name of geology, for the origin of man. As to the origin of the earth still greater diversities exist. To sum up, we can but decide that geology cannot help us much; it is rather a pastime for the amateur.

In concluding against all the geological hypotheses favouring the high antiquity of the human race, we put in opposition one crushing fact, which proves more than all the flint implements. If the race of men is as ancient as scientists declare (and they affirm this, to get rid of

[1] But with the scriptural records, other very early testimony, as, for example, the Egyptian and the Chaldean, is in harmony.

God); if, for instance, there is no Revelation, how are we to understand the prodigiously rapid advancement of man, who stepped forth, abruptly, from a brutalised and savage condition into civilisation, at a comparatively recent date, after having vegetated during many millions of millions of years in uncultivated darkness? This leap cannot be accounted for. It is not the difficulty of a single person reaching civilisation, but of an entire race. The more "advanced" teachers, those most embittered against any religious notion, recognise that civilisation is a relatively recent achievement. There is no proved civilisation which goes back so far as six thousand years. If man is as ancient as they pretend, and if no revelation has been made, how has it happened that, miraculously, on some favourable occasion, civilisation suddenly blossomed forth upon our planet?[1] If man is really, as Rénan says, "exiled from the maternal bosom," and there has been neither creation or revelation, but only evolution, it is hard to know how man, unaided, ever arrived at civilisation at all. Neither does one see how it was that the human species did not perish, for man was weaker and more unprotected than all other animals. This argument is a powerful one in favour of revelation.

True science must, then, confess that it is ignorant as to how the world had its beginning, and how living things and man himself began to exist on this earth. All it can prove is that a principle of progress was placed in the first atom, and that things proceeded one from the other in the way of birth, expansion, development, and so on. Transformism, we hear, "seems destined to destroy the ancient teachings root and branch, to renew the edifice of science, and to overthrow all dogmas." At present, however, we find it to be only a bold, seductive thesis, very uncertain, and containing many weak points. It has enlarged our acquaintance with man's antiquity, but unfolded no secrets affecting his primordial origin, and the religious tradition still remains

[1] "The problem of the first advance of savages towards civilisation is at present much too difficult to be solved."—"Descent of Man," p. 133. "A people which may be called civilised . . . is liable to become indolent and to retrograde when the conditions of life are very easy."—*Ibid.*, p. 143. It is well known that American negroes, who, for several generations, have lived as civilised people, are very apt to return to the savage habits of their ancestors when they take up their abode in Africa.

absolutely unimpaired. On the problem of origins, science can only bring forward rash hypotheses, "by mixing together," as Buffon says, "fables and physics." The true and imperishable glory of science is to acknowledge its proper limits.[1]

IV.

Henceforth, materialism has no right to assert that "man and brute, being of one nature, must have a common destiny."[2] We inquire whether the theories of science are to extend to what has been well termed "the dehumanisation of souls." Can science prove the non-existence of the Soul? It is easy to show that this is impossible. Experiment cannot distinguish between the soul and the body. Such distinction can only be arrived at by philosophy, by reason of their differing phenomena; but pure science cannot arrive at any positive conclusion beyond inference.[3] To the chemist, man appears only as a certain weight of carbon, nitrogen, chalk, and hydrogen; to the biologist he is only a collection of cells; to the zoologist, he is attached, by genealogical descent, to all other beings.

Science does not establish the existence of the soul. If it did so, there would not be a single scientific unbeliever, as we need hardly say. All that science can do (I mean such science as is not obstinately opposed to religion) is to furnish us with some of the elements of philosophical demonstration. But philosophy, and not science, can alone draw conclusions. We have ideas, sentiment, will, and determination. These we know much more intimately than we know the material world, for we know the material world only through our faculties, whilst we know our

[1] All systems are false, as such, and misleading as systems; there are only some parts in each that are sound. "Each person has his own little belief for himself," said the good Princess, "and I claim the right to have also my little theory of evolution for myself." F. Brunetière, "La moralité de la doctrine évolutive."—*Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1st May, 1895, p. 160.

[2] "The fact of man's having thus risen to the very summit of the organic scale, instead of having been aboriginally placed there, may give him hope for a still higher destiny in the distant future."—"Descent of Man," p. 619.

[3] See "The Origin of Human Reason," by St. George Mivart, p. 24; and his "On Truth," pp. 388, 487.

faculties by their proper operations. And herein lies the great condemnation of materialism. Instead of studying the life of the soul in itself, naturalists apply to it the result of their observations of the sensible world, which constitutes the most hateful act of treason that can be conceived. They experiment upon the brain, and study its functions, and thence determine the nature of the faculties of the spirit, and of the principles by which it is governed. How do we examine the brain? With our senses or with our instruments. How do we account for the acts of the soul? Through the reaction of the soul upon itself. For this purpose the senses and the microscope are of no avail. A whole world of things lies outside the radius of their notice. Scientists, then, mistake their desire for its accomplishment, by proclaiming that science has pronounced a definitive verdict as regards the world of spirit and of conscience. They ask from science what it is unable to give, and what cannot be the outcome of its discoveries. In wishing science to pronounce its decrees upon questions of Essence, they eject it from its proper sphere, which does not extend beyond the question of Existence. This subject is wide enough for its highest efforts.

Materialistic science not only denies the existence of the soul, regarding man as a mere animal among other animals, but it also concludes that he is subject, as other living beings are, to mechanical laws alone, so that when his bodily functions cease, the soul ends with them. Hence there can be no free will, no duty, no law, no history, and no future life.

Is man free? Science cannot say. Its range of vision being restricted to pure experiment, it can only suppose, by analogy, that since everything in the universe is determined, man must equally be subject to determinism in all his acts. Man is subject, like other living things, to mechanical laws. The action of physico-chemical laws upon life led Cl. Bernard to state the law of what he calls "physiological determinism,"[1] no less invariable in its own sphere than is mechanical determinism. What we mistake for thought and conscience is, then, perchance only a combination of associated sensations. If man is a free agent,

[1] "Leçons sur les phénomènes de la vie," 1re leçon.

it is philosophy that must prove the fact. Modern science tends to prove the contrary. But it cannot do so without again trespassing upon a domain which is not its own. It may dissect and analyse matter, but it can never demonstrate that thought, sentiment, or intellectual ideas are reduced to nothing more than the movements or vibrations of molecules or mere irresponsible atoms.

Positive science meets the same check in the constitution of moral science. We know the results of its inquiries. It contradicts in every law the "imaginary" code of morality invented by man. It needs no great effort of thought to comprehend the logic which leads the mind on from the principle of the eternity of matter to practical materialism, and to the justification of all excesses of sensuality and all the debasements of selfishness. God must confine Himself to arranging matter as well as possible, but the world, despite the divine inspiration that penetrates it, must ever remain for Him an utter failure. "He cannot require from me that, in my small surroundings, I should do more and better than I already do. No, if matter is without constraint in the whole mass, it is so likewise in my particular life!" Let us then rid ourselves of the foolishness of attempting to govern our passions! The mechanical conception of the world; inflexible determinism, heredity, evolution; the original inequalities of races, organisms, and of brain-matter; the law of the prevalence of might in all grades of the scale of being—are these to become the rules of human conduct? Crime, according to materialistic science, is merely the result of cerebral deformity or constitutional vice. The robber and the assassin are irresponsible, and, therefore, interesting victims of circumstances. Civil and commercial relations rest upon a tacit consent that every one struggling for existence is authorised to deceive his neighbour as much as he can. Without lying and perjury, we are bound to succumb in the warfare of material interests. To be humane, according to the laws of selection, consists in destroying the infirm and the weak. It follows that there is no longer such a thing as fault; that word is exchanged for the word "inconvenience." The consequence is, that each one must arm himself as strongly as possible for the fray, fling away that encum-

brance called honesty, and prefer to succeed by vice rather than to fail through the practice of virtue.

Is there any genuine historic law? Are we absolutely our own masters? Or does Providence, according to Bossuet's noble belief, preside over all events and govern man himself? "Neither paleontology, nor diplomacy, nor archæology," says M. Brunetière, "provides any reply to this question. Yet one is due to us from all of them, for, according to M. Rénan, we have merely invented them to constitute the science of the 'products of the human mind.' Historical sciences are but vain speculations if their researches do not conform to the philosophy of history."

As to the end of man and the immortality of the soul, "when the vital principle goes out of the body all is ended." Science assumes this to be a fact, and adds nothing further. Induction rather weighs against a future life. As it appears to us, death and its results are the same in man as in brutes. Juvenal says—"Death of itself proclaims how fragile are the poor bodies of men."[1] Supernaturalism upholds the belief that the soul, being invisible, continues to exist without our perceiving it after the death of the body. As the soul is invisible, science "cannot demonstrate its existence for a moment." But neither can it deny it. M. Littré violates this principle when he writes that "science is unable to prove any fact of the soul's life after the body dies. Such is the result of long inquiry and scientific research." The future existence does not come under the powers of the senses, therefore it is not! Is this sound argument? "To modern scientists," says M. Guyau, "immortality will ever remain a problem; if this problem has received no positive solution, neither has it been disproved."[2] The learned of our times are rather disposed to say with the Christian Liturgy, "life is transformed, but is not destroyed"—*vita mutatur, non tollitur.*

We have seen that science affords no proof of the non-existence of God, but that it rather tends to reveal a cause external to all that we perceive; which is the cause

[1] "Mors sola fatetur quantula sint hominum corpuscula."—"Sat." x., v. 172, 173.

[2] "L'irréligion de l'avenir," p. 450.

of the world, and the cause of life.[1] It proves God further, by its demonstration of magnificent general laws. But to verify the laws of nature is not to prove the existence of their Author, if, indeed, they possess one. On this point again science supplies some of the elements of philosophical demonstration. It proceeds no further. God is outside the reach of experiment. We can perceive only material things, and He is a pure Spirit. We can attain to Him only by reason. The greatest scientists agree with us in this, and M. Rénan himself, when wishing to prove the existence of God, did not attempt it by scientific demonstration. His proof is, that man has everywhere inevitably conceived the idea of the Infinite, and he adds—"It is said that the illustrious English physicist, Faraday, in a lecture at the Royal Institute of London, never used the term 'God,' although he was a deeply religious man. One day, by chance, the name escaped him, and it immediately elicited sympathetic applause. Faraday, perceiving it, interrupted his discourse with these words—'I have given you a surprise in pronouncing the name of God in this place. If that did not happen before, it is because in these lectures I only represent experimental science. But the idea and reverence for God convince my intellect by methods as assured as those which bring us to the truth in the physical order.'"[2]

The question of miracles is connected with that of the existence of God. In the eyes of scientists, miracles and the supernatural are irregularities and caprices to which science allows no place in the rigorous action of natural laws. But science, on the other hand, furnishes an argument in favour of miracles. It shows that God has certainly intervened in nature, at least in the origin of things, to create and organise both matter and life. But what God has done once He can certainly do again, when He so wills, without heeding the veto of science. Certain materialists, more logical than some supernaturalists,

[1] Herbert Spencer admits that every change is due to motion, and that behind motion is the power which causes it. What and where that power is he cannot tell, because he does not know. If he were satisfied to confess that he did not know, we should have no reason to find fault with him. But with the insolent dogmatism of unbelief, he goes further and declares that "nobody knows," for it is "unknowable."

[2] Discours de réception a l'Académie Française, 27th April, 1882.

willingly grant this. In fact they lean upon it as an argument for getting rid of the dogma of creation. A supernatural beginning, they say, would imply a supernatural continuance, and that they will not admit on any account. It is therefore clearly a mistake to contend, with M. Rénan, that in admitting miracles, one is "outside science."[1] But, it is urged, science insists that the laws which govern nature are invariable. We reply—"What do we know about this?" Is science so well acquainted with all the laws of nature as to be able to establish the principle that they have never changed? And, allowing that those laws are invariable, can we predicate as much of phenomena? Are not they subject to numerous conditions which are naturally variable, in the first rank among which we must class the will of man? Cannot man develop when he will the energies of light, heat, magnetism, and electricity? Whenever he makes a movement does he not modify the equilibrium of the surroundings in which he is placed? In reality, it is loss of time to inquire whether miracles are possible or not. According to the definition a miracle is a free act of God who intervenes to modify the ordinary course of things; that God produces it when He deems it to be necessary, but that we cannot proceed to verify it by scientific experiment. Science has for its domain the verification of natural facts. It can produce some of these facts, but it cannot produce a miracle. God performs, or does not perform, miracles as He chooses. Not all the men of science combined can prevent or can compel Him. We know then that the supreme free Cause is reached rather by the humble prayer of a believer, than by the eloquence of Academies. Moreover, we know too indistinctly the essence of God, of nature, and of ourselves, to be enabled to say without presumption—"Miracles are, or are not, possible." Let us proceed. If the supernatural is undeniably revealed in history, we must submit. As to their truth, miracles do not rely upon scientific proof, but upon historical evidence. History is the witness as to whether miracles do or do not exist. It is related that a certain miracle occurred at a certain time and place. We examine the records of the

[1] "Vie de Jésus," preface.

miracle, and interrogate the witnesses. Here is the criterion. The historian may and should be strict in his examination of such evidence, but his judgment should not be given in advance, before he has heard the witnesses. The method pursued by scientists is to begin by declaring that miracles are impossible, because their possibility has not been established; then, by reasoning in a vicious circle, which there is no pretence to conceal, they declare that it is impossible that miracles exist, because they are impossible! We may say here with Bossuet—"The greatest derangement of the mental faculties is to believe things are, because we wish them to be." "To replace examination," says Victor Hugo, "by the determination not to believe may be useful, but it is not scientific." Science is seeking for truth, and has therefore no right to despise anything proffered as proof. The unexpected ought always to be looked for by it. Its plain duty is to examine, to reject the certainly chimerical, and support the certainly true. It must verify and distinguish. Its work is to make selection. A detected error must not lead to wholesale rejection, for error and truth may be mixed together. To refuse to a phenomenon the attention it merits, is to call in question the verdict of science." The first rule in criticism is not to believe a mystery, or to deny a miracle, without proof, but "to prove all things, and hold fast that which is good," according to the counsel of the Apostle (1 Thess. v. 21). It is not enough to say that one has never seen a miracle, or experienced such a thing. Proof must be forthcoming that no one has ever witnessed such facts, or been the instrument of their operation. We all know that a certain number of persons believe that miracles have occurred; that among them are many truly sincere and enlightened men. Against such convictions and testimony what can the doubts of an individual avail? In all cases these can form but a simple presumption, a motive for closely scrutinising the value of the evidence alleged in favour of such facts in the absence of reasons for denying them. And thus it is not by pure nor by experimental science, but by historical criticism, that we can pronounce judgment upon the existence of any such manifestation. Did Jesus Christ really exist? Did He work the miracles attributed

to Him? Did He proclaim Himself to be the Son of God? Did He rise from the dead? Did the Apostles and the disciples of Christ suffer death to testify to what they declared they had seen and heard? In this lies the whole history of Christianity. Do these facts pass beyond the control of science? Are they its legitimate subject-matter? Can it destroy their authority? Or, on the other hand, does history support them? These questions demand an impartial inquiry, which we shall undertake later on; but, meanwhile, we may state that the boldest criticism has in no degree weakened the authority of the Gospels.[1]

V.

It would be futile to rely upon science, in the hope of discovering which opinions we ought to adopt regarding the great problems of human nature. Science does not undertake to supply that food for which our moral nature craves, for she has not fathomed the enigma of life. There are questions which exercise men's minds, that science has either not touched at all, or else has endeavoured to dispose of by suppressing them. "That is a poor science," says Carlyle, "which would hide away from us the great deep sacred infinitude of Nescience, whither we can never penetrate, and whereon all science floats like a mere empty husk. The world, in spite of all our science and all our knowledge, remains a wondrous miracle, inimitable, and more than magical, to every one who thinks."[2] "It is true," as M. Brunetière has lately remarked, "the physical or natural sciences have promised to abolish 'mystery.' But so far, not only have they not done away with it, but we are now clearly convinced that they will never succeed even in explaining it. They are powerless, I do not say to

[1] "Et quel temps fut jamais plus fertile en miracles?" The irony of impious men and the literature of a corrupt age do not disprove attested and indisputable cures, such as the miracles worked at Lourdes, for example. One may ridicule them, and say that those walking corpses play in a strange comedy. The miracles may be attributed to merely natural causes, or explained away scientifically, as evidence of the neglect or impotence of the medical faculty. Fortunately for the sick, their fate rests not with the faculty, but with the Virgin to whose keeping these miracles have been confided. (See Dr. Boissaric's book on these cures.)

[2] "History of the French Revolution."

resolve, but even to state efficiently the really important problems which relate to the origin of man, to the laws which should govern his conduct, and to his future destiny. The 'Unknowable' surrounds and shuts us in on every side, so that from the laws of physics, and the results of physiological research, nothing can be acquired. The Mosaic hypothesis of creation answers the question, 'From whence do we come?' but the theory of evolution can never provide a satisfactory reply to it. Neither anthropology nor ethnology nor linguistic science will ever tell us what we are, nor have they ever undertaken to do so. What we are as animals, natural science may be able to teach. It will never inform us what we are as men. What is the origin of language, of society, or of morality? Whoever has attempted, during this century, to answer these inquiries has failed signally, and the same thing will always happen; because, as we cannot conceive man without morality, without language, or outside social life, these elements of his composition are the ones which science is incompetent to define. Is there any occasion to add, that for far weightier reasons, natural sciences can never settle the question of our future destiny? What have anatomy and physiology taught concerning our condition after death? They undertook to explain and reveal our nature in such a manner that, from the knowledge acquired, we should learn our destiny. But their researches and discoveries—which I by no means despise—only end by increasing our attachment to this life, and this seems the height of folly and irrationality in a being who must at last die."[1]

We will not allude to the "bankruptcy of science," but we may mention, with M. Brunetière, "its partial defalcations."[2] We will not go so far as to maintain that science is "the multiplication of things unknown," but we may venture to say there is no need to be troubled at its definitions. Among scientists we distinguish between practitioners and theorists. Some practitioners are admirable

[1] *Revue des Deux Mondes*, "Après une visite au Vatican," 1er Juin, 1895.

[2] The merit of M. Brunetière consists in his having so courageously ventured to combat the pretensions of science, and to cast doubt upon its promises.

for their sagacity, patience, and devotedness. It is to the theorists that its bankruptcy is due. It is to them and their philosophy that the reproach attaches.[1] Newton, with haughty disdain for hypotheses, said—"Hypotheses non fingo"—I do not invent hypotheses. All that can be done is to talk of the discoveries of science, to show that the grandeur of science proves the greatness of man; that it inspires a high opinion of the intelligence of man, and that it enables us to draw a few inferences in our own favour. But to seek from it satisfactory answers upon the most important questions that affect humanity is not a thing to be dreamt of. "Science," says M. Rénan, "preserves from error rather than teaches truth. We are less mistaken in avowing that we do not know, than in believing that we know, many things of which we are truly ignorant."[2] "Our contemporaries," says Tolstoi, "after emancipating themselves from a number of religious prejudices, have fallen, without perceiving it, under the domination of other prejudices quite as dangerous as those from which they have freed themselves—I mean scientific prejudices. I will venture to add that the followers of science do now what the Egyptian priests did of old, who, being uncontrolled by their brethren, lied in the most shameful manner, and palmed off their own inventions as truths."[3]

In one of his last works[4] Dr. Richet attempts to prove by science that probably certain inventions and improvements will, before long, render life more tolerable and agreeable. Positive science will become the sovereign ruler of humanity. It will eliminate metaphysics, contenting itself with the study of psychology; it will replace love, by selection applied to human beings; it will find in occultism forces not yet in operation, from the unknown world; lastly, it will establish communication between ourselves and the dwellers in all the other planets. Languages and

[1] "Every time one of these imaginative persons slips into the sanctuary, every time one of these rash touch-everythings invades the laboratory and sets about handling the instruments and arranging matters, professed scientists must be on their guard or they will be liable to strange surprises." — A. de la Barre, "La science Idéale" et "l'explication scientifique," *Correspondant*, 10 Juin, 1896.

[2] "L'Avenir de la science," preface, p. xix.

[3] *Revue des Revues*, October, 1893.

[4] "Dans Cent Ans."

religions will be but little changed. Morality will be altruistic, or utilitarian, but will need no laws to enforce it. "The suggestions of these ideas within us will form a vague conscience." "To preserve from cold, hunger, or disease is not," M. Richet admits, "to render men happy, and it is all that we are now able to do for them." This is the old story of a terrestrial Paradise. We are assured that by eating of the fruits of science we shall be as gods.[1] Who can fail to perceive that misery is made more distressing by such deceptive visions? Old age and death present ever-approaching terrors, the certainty whereof suffices to embitter the brightest existence, if there is no hope beyond the grave. We require the incitements of faith, humility, and repentance to illumine that dreary valley of death, which the ancients termed "The Great Terrifier," and which the Bible calls "The Great Deliverer." What security can science hold out to us at that hour, of which, says Mgr. Perraud, "the anticipation freezes with fear even the most intrepid." Verily, the human soul carries with it an insatiable desire of the infinite. There are many who say there is something beyond physics and chemistry which have led us astray; that there are certain elements in man which are irreducible to the inert molecule; mind, genius, moral grandeur, and heroism come from another mould. All the discovered improvements do not destroy in man that conviction, nor appease his desire for the infinite. Science cannot suffice to supply our wants.

Above all, science does not suffice for the young student. It will never relieve his soul of apprehensions and doubts as to what is beyond the grave. He may agree to forego knowledge by demonstration of things that are of secondary importance. His great anxiety is for himself; to know what awaits him. Is he "To be or not to be?" To be sure of this is of the first importance. He would rather

[1] Certain sects have recently arisen in England whose adherents profess to be disciples of Gautama Buddha. They declare that a perfect acquisition of the knowledge they profess to impart will eventually transform men into gods. Such are the Theosophists, established by Madame Blavatsky, and the Hermetists, invented by the late Mrs. Kingsford and Mr. Edward Maitland. Like all other sectarians, the advocates of these neo-pagan systems contradict and accuse one another of "false doctrine," and even of "fraud."—*Vide* Mr. Maitland's "Life of Anna Kingsford, M.D."; also, Mr. Ould's "Exposure of Theosophy."

be deprived of chemistry and geometry than of this thought and of the hopes allied to it. To quarrel with him for this hope is not to put him in his right place, but to degrade him; because he is not only a political being, but a religious being before all else. There has lived in our own days a young savant, too quickly, alas! taken away from studies full of promise. He, too, believed that positive science provided the true explanation of things. But, being truly sincere, he speedily discovered that science not only did not respond to all the lawful aspirations of our being, but that it was not sufficient in itself. He found his road to Damascus, in the very path of free inquiry. "Whatever empiricism and utilitarianism may say," he wrote a short while before his death, "there are certitudes outside the experimental method and progress apart from its brilliant and useful applications. The human mind can employ its energies, work in harmony with reason, and attain its discoveries, in a sphere as superior to that of the laboratory or of mere industry, as the latter is to more intellectual efforts. In a word, there is a certain temple of light, the portals of which neither calm nor experience will open to the soul, but wherein the soul penetrates with certainty and safety, when it preserves the consciousness of its old prerogatives." [1]

Such is the vanity of the promises of science, by the avowal of those who have been its most ardent supporters. This deceiver, that admits nothing beyond what is seen, felt, weighed, measured, bought, and sold; which cannot preserve us from the accidents of life, nor deliver us from infirmities; which affords no consolation to us under the injustice and selfishness of man, and cannot save us from death, but allows a horrible uncertainty to hang over our future; this persecutor, which proposes as our last end the eternal evolution of matter—has it the right to hinder religion "from aiding us to live, and, above all, to die?" [2] Has it the right to tear heaven from us, to abolish the miraculous, where those mysteries in which the poor

[1] "Histoire de la philosophie moderne dans son rapport avec la science de la nature;" ouvrage posthume de Fernand Papillon, introduction, p. 20.

[2] G. Duruy, "Ni Dieu ni maître."

sorrowing existence of a man has its apotheosis? It was so sweet to feel the certainty that we had not before us the hideous abyss of nothingness; that the destitute would find on high eternal riches and joys; and the suffering, the healing of all their woes." May we not address to haughty, contemptuous science the apostrophe of Rolla?—

> Pour qui travailliez-vous, démolisseurs stupides,
> Lorsque vous disséquiez le Christ sur son autel?
> . . . . . .
> Les monts sont nivelés, la plaine est éclairçie,
> Vous avez sagement taillé l'arbre de vie!
> Tout est bien balayé sur vos chemins de fer,
> Tout est grand, tout est beau; mais on meurt dans votre air!

No! the wellbeing of society does not depend on science or on inventions, of which only few men of talent are capable. The prodigious success of our scientific acquirements has, during this century, inspired us with mistaken pride. "I willingly bow to science as a queen," said M. de Mun from the French Tribune, "but I refuse to adore her as a divinity."[1] Civilisation does not consist only in the laying out of roads, the building of monuments, the cutting of canals, the equipment of armies, or the amelioration of the condition of man. It is wise to encourage the pursuit of science, and to expect from it, and particularly from natural science, progressive discovery and enlightenment. But those who have the capacity to appreciate and derive benefit from higher culture will always be comparatively few in number. Secular education, which alone is accessible to the masses, does not, apart from religion, produce or ensure either morality or happiness. "It is but a key which unlocks for our perusal useful and consoling records, as well as injurious literature, ranging from evil suggestions of various kinds to the formulæ for compounding explosives."[2] And this kind of knowledge is apt to unclass individuals, causing some to become discontented in their humble sphere and surroundings, others to descend from an honourable position and career to the level of the irreligious, impure, seditious, or other malcontents of a debased sort. Education sharpens the faculties of the individual, but it increases his wants. A man becomes one of the unclassed

[1] 1st May, 1894.

[2] "Après M. Rénan," M. de Vogue, *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 15th November, 1892.

by the intense feeling of the superiority of his Self, and the inferiority of his position. True civilisation and moral progress can only be secured by improving in the practice of known truths. Neither the Decalogue nor the Gospel can be improved upon. To propagate their divine teachings is to raise ourselves towards progress; whilst to de-christianise our race is to hasten its return to barbarism.

M. Lamy lately addressed a party of young men in these noble words, which express our own thoughts and may serve as the conclusion of this chapter—"History has spoken; science has gone beyond our hopes, and surpassed itself. Had its progress marked a decline of Faith, no past generation would have the right to be regarded as irreligious as we are. And yet, you who have been nourished upon science, do you feel that it has satisfied your whole being? You are divided between admiration of its power and sorrow for its impotence. You know that it teaches you nothing on what concerns you most—your inner self, your nature, and your destiny. It would seem that science has only added a stronger impulse to your desire to rise above it. 'Nothing exists beyond it,' your friends have assured you, but it is that very 'beyond' which disturbs you, and causes you to look upon religious faith in a different light. Among you there are some who believe, and others who do not; that is an old story, but somewhat changed, for now believers do not think of apologising for their faith before sceptics, and the latter have ceased to be proud of their sense of vagueness. Without discussing the origin of the religious sentiment, a mystery which reason cannot fathom, we must consider it in its results, for there it is competent to express its judgment. It is then, in the religious sentiment, that we find the answer to the enigma of life, efficacious rules of conduct, a check to selfishness, and a means of alleviation for human miseries; in a word, Religion must be admitted to be a social advantage."[1]

Science is but a dark lantern at best, and bears no comparison to a Revelation, which proves its own title deeds.

[1] "The New Generation." A discourse pronounced on the 28th January, 1893, in the hall of the Geographical Society at Paris.

CHAPTER II.

SPIRITUALISM, OR THE SUPERNATURAL, AND THE FINAL EXPLANATION OF THINGS.

"Songez que je ne vous objecte qu'une aile de papillon, quand je pourrais vous écraser du poids de l'univers."—DIDEROT, "Pensées Philosophiques."

"There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy."—"Hamlet," Act I., Scene 5.

THE student who has embarked upon a scientific career, either because it is the fashion or because science holds out certain seductive promises, will hardly care to pause for the purpose of interrogating philosophy on the great problems that concern humanity. He has been persuaded to believe that everything which is not apparent to, or capable of being verified by, the senses is chimerical. He becomes attached to popular theories, and follows the current of scientific speculation. That current does not flow in the direction of philosophy, consequently he does not apply to philosophy for the solution of his difficulties, and yet he must address himself to it in the end, for it is in his regard the sole human source of light and truth on all questions of vital importance.

Ever since philosophy has existed it has treated of such problems as being within its own province, and has always been considered of the highest authority in dealing with them. These problems present themselves naturally to the human mind, however little cultivated it may be, and philosophy has been called into being by the necessity of answering them. If man, left to himself, without any revelation can perceive what his position is in the universe, it is evident that this light can only come to him from philosophy. On the other hand, we cannot hope for other

aids from philosophy than those which philosophers have gathered from their meditations, nor can we find other solutions or systems than such as they have formulated in the course of centuries.

What, then, do philosophers say? M. Caro has clearly proved when writing on "The Idea of God" that the whole of philosophy, after all, reduces itself to two systems, and that only two hypotheses are possible, viz., that of Pantheism, in which an unconscious force produces all the marvellous effects existing in the universe, a system which involves a contradiction on the face of it; or, that of Spiritualism, wherein a self-conscious Intelligence is the supreme reason and explanation of all existing phenomena. Philosophers, who seem to be diminishing in number, form themselves into two distinct groups. The first (and they constitute, as yet, but mere units) fondly believe that Spiritualism has innate power to force itself upon us; that it is a truth which admits of no resistance. These are known as the "Separate Spiritualists."[1] For them Philosophy is far superior to Religion. Under the pretext that their philosophical dogmas are easy to believe they look down upon Christianity as a vastly inferior system. The second group is composed of philosophers who find in the divers systems of philosophy only amusement for our thoughts, a piece of intellectual fencing which leads to no convincing result. According to them philosophy ought to be studied out of pure curiosity, and for the pleasure which it affords to a dilettante or an historian without any thought of real profit. The former say—"Young man, reason can tell us all that it is necessary for us to know about our origin and our destiny. It teaches us, in the clearest manner, without illusion or symbol. We are safeguarded against all deception. We have within us the testimony which we bear regarding ourselves!" The latter

[1] It must be understood that the author does not use the word "spiritualist" in the sense in which it is understood by our Spiritualists, Theosophists, Hermetists, and other necromancers. These he would term "spiritists," *i.e.*, dealers with spirits. By Spiritualism he means the doctrine of those who hold that the soul is a spirit with an eternal destiny, and that this world was made by a Supreme Spirit, but demonstrate it to themselves by reason alone, and are unwilling to accept the aid of Christian Revelation to confirm and complete their idea of God and of the soul. Such are the Unitarians and Theists.

exclaim—"Philosophy explains nothing. It is but a vast algebraic problem in which we argue with extreme rigour on imaginary quantities." What ought a young student to think of this? We will tell him.

We have no wish to deceive or to make, in the name of philosophy, any exaggerated promises which it cannot keep. "Philosophy," says Louis de Sacy, "is a maker of fine promises which it does not fulfil." We, however, take care to warn the student before he launches forth into the study of these problems by the aid of philosophy, that man is a spiritualist by instinct and by the natural bent of his reasoning faculties. And this may be said of the whole human race. From a traditional and social point of view spiritualism has ever been the outcome of the general sentiment, the systematising of common sense. "But," they exclaim, "how much obscurity! what difficult questions! how feeble the answers which this system of spiritualism involves"! Perhaps we may be permitted to indulge, at the outset, in a little harmless bantering of our modern philosophers, Cousin, Jouffroy, and Jules Simon. They have informed us that philosophy was about to supplant Christianity; that Christianity had indeed helped nations when in a state of mental childhood to acquire the use of reason; but that now, having grown up, they were about to see in philosophy the unadulterated truth disengaged from all symbol or illusion; and that, henceforth, all men would know what to believe about the great problems on which humanity rests. Nowadays, such confident predictions cause us only to smile; for never, as M. Janet confesses, has spiritualism been so threatened as it is now. "Spiritualism is, at the present day, exposed to the greatest perils by which it has ever been menaced since the publication of Voltaire's 'Encyclopædia.'"[1] And again—"The idea of God has never been subjected to so fierce an attack as in our day, the like has never been known in the whole course of history."[2] M. Caro, on behalf of his party, says—"The idea of God is in danger."[3] And Guizot adds—

[1] "The Crisis of Philosophy."

[2] "The Testament of a Philosopher," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1st June, 1885.

[3] "The Idea of God and its New Critics."

"The Spiritualists,[1] and such like people, have the shadow of God; Christians alone have the living God."[2] M. Jules Simon wrote lately—"I have lost my old faith in philosophy."[3] M. Sully-Prudhomme, in "Que sais-je?" owns that he would not risk a mark on the solutions of German philosophy, notwithstanding their wonderful ingenuity. "But," he adds, "on the other hand, all the gold mines of the world would be insufficient to pay for the irresistible proofs they offer to their fellow-men of the immortality of the soul, of free will, and of Divine Justice, the repairer of all earthly wrongs." Such acknowledgments afford us an excellent reason for meditating upon the illusions of a philosophical mind, and on the weaknesses of all human systems.

However, we do not belong to that order of sceptics who scorn the lights of reason. We know that human reason can discover truths in the metaphysical order. Human reason is the child of God and the mother of Truth. We acknowledge that all pagan ideas are not necessarily or *per se* false. If all such ideas were even dangerous, we should have to renounce the instruction to be gained by contact with many high intellects. We should be obliged to make use of Omar's dilemma—"If their books say the same things as the Bible, they are useless, and we shall do well to get rid of them; if they say things contrary to it, they are dangerous, and ought to be destroyed." Christians have never reasoned thus. They have invariably sought rational bases for their theology, and faith has never ceased to be, according to that beautiful expression of St. Augustine, a Faith which seeks to understand—*fides quærens intellectum.* Hence they studied at the schools of the pagan

[1] By "Spiritualists" are here meant the Deists and Theists who admit the existence of a Deity but deny Revelation.

[2] "Meditations on the Essence of the Christian Religion."

[3] "Philosophical Year," a newspaper supplement, 1st Jan., 1894. M. Jules Simon was a great enthusiast in his day. For him at that period in his life there were "no clouds," and all was "clear in spiritualism." *Quantum mutatus!* He found philosophy an insufficient Viaticum, and died lately a Christian death. Jules Simon, originally a Jew of humble parentage, became in turn philosopher, politician, philanthropist, reformer, scholar, member of the French Academy, and finally closed his career in June, 1896, by becoming a Catholic. The last chapter of one of his most important works, "On Duty," reveals the aspirations of his truly colossal mind—"Our real life is with God. There is no real, substantial thought but the thought of the Eternal."

sages, and hence St. Augustine infused into his works the lofty ideas he acquired from Plato. The Fathers of the Nicæan Council did not disdain to borrow an expression from Plotinus; and the writers of the Middle Ages strove to assimilate the scientific conceptions of Aristotle. Origen characterised sound Philosophy rightly, as "the preface to Christianity." We do not deny that reason alone may discover truths and make demonstrations. What we affirm is, that the philosophical teaching of the present day, complete and extensive as it is, cannot be regarded as the work of reason alone. We believe that if Revelation did not exist in the world, Spiritualism by itself would be simply an hypothesis a little more plausible than other hypotheses, but with very little precision in its affirmations. "It is difficult," said Plato, "to find the Father of the Universe, and still more difficult, when found, to point Him out to others." Before the dawn of Christianity, Philosophy propounded many magnificent theories about the divine world and the inanity of chance; but the spiritualism of Plato and Aristotle, those two great dreamers, was replete with incongruous ideas and grave contradictions. It lacked the clearness and precision of Christian spiritualism. It is a foregone conclusion that, if Jesus Christ had not appeared in this world of ours, we should never have had any such solid and satisfactory spiritualism as we possess. Those who pretend that the ancients found God, and knew Him as we do, and believed firmly in the immortality of the soul, must be ignorant of history. We can only compare them to travellers who, being in a forest during the middle of the night, and seeing the stars through the high trees, imagine them to be growing as fruit from the dark branches.[1] Moreover, philosophy without religion, even when imbued with, and developed by, Christianity, is at best a mere occupation. It interests but a small number of men, compared with the millions who live by Faith. Its want of moral power is great. It responds but feebly to the requirements of humanity; it explains very inefficiently those three facts of human existence, the reason for which it is all important for man to know, viz., Birth, Life, and Death. Here we might well use the very suggestive expression of

[1] See on this subject "Moral Ideas of Antiquity," by Jules Denys.

Fénelon—"Human reason must begin by ascending to its greatest height, in order to understand its own limits."[1]

I.

We have seen that man, cast into the midst of the universe, without knowing whence he comes, whither he is going, why he suffers, why even he exists, what punishment or what reward will be the result of his agitated life, can but question his fellow-creatures on the subject to discover whether they know more than he does. Some answer that there is a God, the Author of all things, all wise and all consistent in His acts; others deny His existence. The former declare that man's conduct must be regulated by a law of right and wrong. The latter protest that neither right nor wrong exist, that such things are merely the self-interested inventions of the great ones of the earth. Among these contradictions, the student feels a mysterious craving for a fixed belief. He understands that only a weak mind can allow itself to be carried away on the torrent of life without inquiring whither it leads; unlike the savage who, having heard of the arrival of a missionary, hastened to him with the inquiry—"They tell me you know where the great Spirit is. Can you direct me to Him?"

The first problem that presents itself to our reason is that of the origin of things. A reflective mind looking out upon the universe asks itself—"Who is the Maker of all that I see? Is it God? Why should not matter be the necessary Being, which has ever existed, and has developed of itself?" The atheist philosopher will answer—"The universe accounts for its own existence by primordial matter, necessary and eternal, the evolutions of which have produced the actual world." To the same question the

[1] We do not mean that human reason cannot demonstrate with certitude the existence of God, for we should thus be in contradiction with the Vatican Council.—*Si quis negaverit Deum naturali rationis lumine certo cognosci posse, anathema sit.* The Council simply defined that we are obliged to believe that by the simple light of reason, without faith, we can certainly prove the existence of God. But the Council does not say that reason can do so easily, always, or necessarily. The Fathers of the Council well knew that human reason, apart from the Jewish and Christian traditions, has ever been vacillating on questions of religion. This applies even to Faith's most valiant champions.

spiritualist philosopher replies—"The world explains its existence only by a Divine Creation." Which of the two is right?

Let us first acknowledge that the idea of Creation, as Christian dogma has popularised it, should not be looked upon as a thesis which spiritualism can of itself demonstrate with exactness. From a metaphysical point of view Creation is very difficult to prove. The old philosophers, Plato and Aristotle, had no idea of it. Human reason in its most elevated form has not attained to it, and no philosopher can be quoted who ever formed an unassisted conception of it. Epicurus and the Stoics held that matter is eternal. Epicurus attributed to blind chance the order that reigns in the world. The Stoics, following their common sense, understood that the latter hypothesis was the least probable explanation of cosmic order, and they taught the existence of an infinite intelligence spread throughout the universe. Such, in their eyes, is the reason for the order prevailing in nature. Others looked upon the world as an emanation from God. This was the doctrine held by the Eleates and the school of Alexandria. These various systems clearly prove that the idea of Creation is not one which would present itself naturally to the mind, since ancient philosophers of superior genius did not even guess that it had occurred. Moreover, God appears far greater in the doctrine of Creation than in that of emanation. We cannot understand that a part of the infinite God could become finite. It involves a contradiction. On the other hand, what must be the power of a God who creates a being in its entire substance, finite beings, too, such as stones and trees, without imparting to them anything of Himself? This doctrine is truly excellent, but we must confess that it is difficult to understand. "Creation is an hypothesis replete with difficulties," says M. Janet. And M. Franck continues—"I do not absolutely condemn the doctrine of Creation, but I declare it to be an act impossible for human reason to conceive." This philosophical idea appeared in the eyes of the Gnostics so difficult to admit (although they were regarded as a sect of Christians), that in order to explain it they invented intermediary Eons between God and matter. Hence the

very clear notion which we form of the Creation as described in the Bible, "Let there be light; and light was made" (Gen., chap. i. 3). "For He spoke and they were made; He commanded and they were created" (Ps. cxlviii. 5), though so impossible for human reason to attain, gives us a sublime idea of the Christian dogma. Our admiration exceeds all limits when we reflect that, according to Christian doctrine, not only has God created everything *ex nihilo*, but also that he could, at pleasure, annihilate all finite beings. He can cause, for instance, trees and stones no longer to exist, and make the earth, the heavens, and the stars return to their original nothingness. How powerful, then, is the God of the Christian.[1]

Let us endeavour to penetrate deeper into this dogma, without, however, losing sight of the restrictions we have laid down. When we affirm the dogma of creation *ex nihilo*, we do not mean to affirm the fecundity of nothingness. We all know that nothing can be produced out of nothing. It is beyond doubt that God cannot give an existence to nothingness, since nothingness is non-existence. But creation as the act of God is quite another thing. It is to give being to that which was not—"He spoke, and they were made" (Ps. cxlviii. 5). How did God create? This is, for us, an unanswerable question, of which I can see no explanation, nor anything contradictory in it either. Are we to refuse to believe the fact of creation because we cannot fathom its How, or Why, or Wherefore? "Our understanding is not the measure of our belief," said Bossuet.

It is objected that two substances are more than one

[1] In the dogma of the Holy Eucharist the Church teaches that after the Consecration the *substance* of the Eucharistic elements ceases to exist; their *appearances* alone remain unaltered. This imperceptible change is transubstantiation. The essence, or substance, is that which constitutes the thing, which makes it what it is, and it is distinct from the accidents or qualities such as shape, size, colour, taste, smell, and weight, which may change, while the thing itself remains unchanged. The Aristotelian distinction between substance, which is imperceptible by the senses, and accident, which comes under their cognition, has been adopted by the Church. See also "A Catholic Dictionary" *in loco*. As familiar examples of accidental change, involving no change of substance, we may instance the change from ice to water or from oil to wax, and *vice versa*. In the natural order when a change of substance occurs it is accompanied by a change of accidents, as in petrefaction. In transubstantiation the substance alone changes, while the accidents of bread and wine remain absolutely unchanged.

therefore Creation has added something to God's Being. How then are we to reconcile this increase of the Being of God with the nature of the infinite which does not allow of increase? But is it not clear that this objection places the finite within the infinite, the created in the Uncreated? It destroys the connection and expects to find a homogeneous total. The Finite and the Infinite, the Created and the Uncreated, are not homogeneous, because there cannot be any relation of quantity between them. How could the finite, which is continually receiving all that it has and is from the Infinite, in any way tend to increase the latter? And thus the specious objection of the pantheists falls to the ground.[1]

[1] It is impossible to make a radical separation between the Universe and God; and, on the other hand, it is impossible to identify the one with the other, or man with God. If we separate the Universe from God, the Universe becomes an Absolute Being. We would then be confronted by two Absolute Beings, the Universe and God, which is one too many. If we identify one with the other, or man with God, we conceive only one Being and that an Absolute Being. By hypothesis this Absolute Being is immovable, and is, and must be, all that can be. For the Absolute Being time is non-existent; but as the Universe is essentially a product of time, there could be no Universe at all in this latter case. The difficulty consists not in knowing whether we are, or the Universe is, a derived substance or not. Whatever we are we are not God. We are something which depends essentially upon God. This dependence we call creation to distinguish it from both dualism and pantheism. Hence it becomes clear that pantheism is an unstable mean between acosmism (that is, the suppression of the Universe, since the Universe is, in our first hypothesis, the necessary development of God) on the one hand, and Atheism (which is the suppression of God, which takes place when, according to our second hypothesis, we posit the Universe as Absolute) on the other.

The true solution of the difficulty lies in creationism. This term does not go the length of isolating the Universe from God. We are obliged by it to admit the conservation of the Universe, Providence, and dependence in each and every being in its operations and in every one of its acts. This dependence is as limited as possible, but is nevertheless of such a nature as to confer individuality on the Universe. How is this relation between God and the Universe to exist? That is impossible for us to determine. Let it be regarded as X. Pantheism is illogical unless it is reduced to this formula—"God cannot exist without the Universe." Every contrary formula which leaves room for the possibility of separation between God and the Universe is a creationist formula.

I venture to quote here from "A Manual of Catholic Theology," p. 186—"1. The notion of Divine Infinity excludes the possibility of things existing independently outside God, but not of things existing dependently on Him.

"2. Things outside the Divine Substance cannot be added to the Divinity so as to produce either a greater being or at least a greater aggregate of beings. Hence God *plus* the Universe is not more than God alone. For the same reason it cannot be said that the Incarnation added being to the Divinity; for the human nature of Christ is only united to the Divine Person inasmuch as God produces it and a Divine Person possesses it.

"3. The Divine Infinity does not prevent God's knowledge, volition, and activity from being extended to objects outside Him (*ad extra*). Such

As to the question of creation, philosophy has to prove simply that those hypotheses which are opposed to creation, such as that of an eternal world, do not explain satisfactorily the origin and existence of things. And, as there are only these two hypotheses, viz., either the world has always existed, or it was produced entirely by a cause independent of itself, philosophy leads up in this manner to the notion of creation and the cause which produced it. "Matter is eternal," say the Materialists; "for nothing is ever lost and nothing is created of itself. The continual metamorphosis of beings shows us the same quantity of matter, which never varies in all its

extension does not imply any real expansion or motion *ad extra*, but only an ideal intention or direction; much less does it imply an increase from without, as it only bears upon things entirely dependent on God."

When Archbishop Murphy, of Hobart, Tasmania, was in India he was often visited by Prince Nizam, the chief of the Parsees, who, like most clever Orientals, was much given to argument on religion. Himself a Pantheist, the Prince asked the Bishop—"Can you subsist without God?" His question being answered in the negative, Nizam said, exultantly—"Therefore you are part of God." In reply Dr. Murphy asked the Prince—"Can you subsist without air?" The answer was obvious. "Then," added the Archbishop, "you must be part and parcel of the atmosphere that surrounds you." The Prince admitted the force of this argument.

Buddhistic Pantheism teaches that—"There is no personal God-Creator on whose mercy and goodwill the universe is dependent. Everything owes its origin and development to its own inherent vitalism, or, what comes to the same thing, its own will to live. Human ignorance it is which alone invented a personal God-Creator. The Buddhist utterly rejects the belief in a personal God, and distinctly denies the doctrine of a creation out of nothing. . . . Buddha gave us no information concerning the first beginning and ultimate destiny of the Universe. He knew (about it) but he taught us nothing, because such knowledge, even if it were possible to impart it, would not promote the spiritual and moral welfare of mankind, nor deliver men from suffering, nor lead them to salvation, to Nirvana. The final cause of all existence can only be comprehended by him, who, like the Buddha, has already attained the most perfect degree of human development—that is, by a Buddha only."—"A Buddhist Catechism," by Subhádra Brikshu, p. 41.

After this piece of dogmatism, in which the Orientals are in nowise inferior to any Western Atheist or sectarian, it may be well to remember the light in which Gautama was, and is, regarded by his followers:—Buddha is "the dispenser of spiritual light, the supreme guide and teacher of all living beings. . . . The Founder of the Kingdom of righteousness and truth, the Self-enlightened Blessed One, perfect in holiness, wisdom, and mercy. . . . Not a God. . . . Nor One sent by God. . . . But a man far superior to ordinary men, one of a series of self-enlightened sublime Buddhas who appear at long intervals in the world, and are morally and spiritually so superior to erring, suffering mankind that to the childlike conceptions of the multitude they appear as Gods or Messiahs. Buddha is not a proper name but means a mental state or condition, the Enlightened; a man who, by his own exertions, has attained supreme knowledge and moral perfection."—*Ibid.*, p. 9-12.

Such is the fantastical superstition which Theosophy and Hermetism offer as a substitute for Christianity!

transformations. If not one atom can be lost, this proves the absolute and eternal being of the atom. Matter is indestructible, therefore it is eternal." But here again certitude of fact is confused with certitude of argument. We admit these facts, but do they not agree as well with the idea of creation as with the false principle of the eternity of matter? Positive experience only pronounces upon the persistence of matter in its actual and determinable quantity. It is mute, and ought to be so, regarding the future as well as the origin of matter. Besides, what sort of logic is such a statement as this—"That which cannot be annihilated has not been created"? But why not? What necessary relation is there between these two ideas? We cannot pass from one proposition to the other without setting aside our own experience. "Can nothingness, left to itself, and of itself, become an existing being? Can a number, an abstraction, a logical "ens," become of itself real, solid, and concrete? Can the homogeneous and indefinite differentiate itself and become heterogeneous? Herbert Spencer strains every nerve to explain the transition from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous. It is, however, evident that no change can take place in a mass totally undefined in every sense, completely homogeneous and identical, unless this comes from the action of a cause different from the mass itself."[1]

If we consider the earth in its entire mass and in the divers modifications it has successively undergone, it is impossible to believe that matter is eternal. The human mind, however, does not feel any invincible repugnance to this proposition. Plato says, "The eternity of matter is in no way offensive to reason." God has ever the same thoughts, and, had He so willed, no appreciable interval of time need have elapsed between the conception of matter in His mind and its external realisation. But even in this case matter is not divine; it issued from the Supreme Cause; it has neither infinite intelligence nor spontaneity nor absolute perfection. It is true that Laplace said, in speaking of God—"I am in no want of

[1] Abbé de Broglie, "The Present and Future of Catholicism in France," p. 103.

that hypothesis." Is it true that he imagined his nebular theory could replace the idea of creation? "If Laplace spoke thus," says M. de Broglie, "he spoke neither as a serious savant nor as a true philosopher. He did not see, what it was easy to perceive, that in displacing, by a single degree, the immediate action of the Creator, he was only carrying the difficulty farther off, and that it would require the same infinite power to form his *nebula* as to organise the universe." There is, in the problem of origins, a mystery before which our poor reason is obliged to bow down, acknowledging itself out-reached and baffled. "The origin of things contains a power greater than ourselves, a mystery which crushes us and breaks down our intellect, and makes us weep for very shame. We go to the extreme verge of the precipice, where lie the germs of all things that exist; we look over, some flashes of light strike on our eyes and disclose only a bottomless abyss beneath. All that is left to us then is but to murmur—'The preternatural is there.'"[1] "The question of creation," said Em. Saisset, "is an open question which cannot be peremptorily disposed of."

II.

The second problem philosophy meets with on its journey is that of Life. There are beings which live. Who produced life? Whence comes that something which enables a being to move, reproduce, and renew itself persistently in its own form? "Either life comes forth by evolution from the inorganic world, or it is a creation, a manifestation of a superior power. *Non datur tertium.*" Such is the expression of Virchow—opposing, in the name even of experimental science, the hazardous assertions of Haeckel on spontaneous generation. Never, up to the present, has the least particle of life, not even the smallest fermentation, proceeded from any chemical compound. Haeckel acknowledges that unless spontaneous production can proceed from inorganic matter, there is no other possible solution but miracle; that is to say, the intervention of a free cause,

[1] Guy de Brémond d'Ars, on "The Moral and Social virtue of Christianity," p. 137.

which, not satisfied with combining pre-existing forces, adds thereto a new element by creating.

Observe that the problem of life is not one of those human problems which philosophy is fond of handling. The spiritualist examines the problem of life to attain his end, *i.e.*, to establish his doctrine. Otherwise he would take no account of it. The spiritual philosopher wishes only to know what he is, and where he is going. He takes up the question of life only because life serves to prove intelligence both in God and in man. It is in the phenomena of life that causality is discussed with the greatest difficulty. Life is very complicated. It has but one end, and many functions combine to produce that end. It is for this reason that the spiritualist studies the vital phenomena. He notices all that is extraordinary in these phenomena, and he endeavours to prove that life cannot be explained either by physico-chemical or mechanical laws, and that, consequently, God is its only cause.

In every living being we see a series of effects so disposed that they must depend on an intelligent cause. The being which is destined to live enjoys the faculty of increasing at the expense of the exterior world. In its turn it transmits life to other particles of matter, which will one day become individuals, similar to those from which they originated. How wonderful is this specific form, perpetuating itself in a succession of beings. "The practice of the experimental method leads me necessarily to the conclusion that, if a watch is the work of human science, the being endowed with life can only have received that life together with existence, intelligence, and moral sense, from divine science."[1] "What an absurdity it is," says Flourens, "to imagine that an organic body, in which all the parts have a connection between them, or co-relation, so admirably and wisely calculated, can be produced by a blind and fortuitous gathering together of physical elements."[2] "In a living being," says Kant, "everything is, reciprocally, both a means and an end." Cuvier remarks—"It constitutes a system in which the parts mutually correspond, concurring in the same definite action by reciprocal reaction." "What

[1] Chevreuil, "History of Chemical Sciences," vol. i., p. 323.
[2] Flourens, "Comparative Anatomy," vol. i., p. 7.

characterises the living machine," says Claude Bernard, "is not the nature of its physico-chemical properties, however complicated they may be, but the creation of that machine which develops itself before our eyes, under the conditions which are proper to it, and according to a definite idea that expresses the nature of the living being, and the very essence of its life."[1] "That which belongs essentially to the domain of life, and does not belong to physics or chemistry or anything else, is the idea which directs this vital evolution. In every living germ there is a creative idea which develops and manifests itself through the organism. The living being remains, throughout its whole duration, under the influence of this same creative vital force. Here, as elsewhere, all is derived from the one idea, which alone creates and directs."[2] And again—"If the notion of final causes is foreign to the studies of the physicist and chemist, it cannot be so with the physiologist, who, by his investigations, is naturally led to admit an harmonious and pre-established finality in organised bodies, by reason of that central unity which renders all partial actions responsible and generative in regard of each other.[3] M. Janet says, in his turn—"A watch does not construct itself: it requires a watchmaker. What would you think of a clock which not only made itself, but could also produce other clocks, endowed with the same faculty of reproduction, and so on, indefinitely? Well, a machine of this kind does exist; it is the brain, and it forms part of a living organism, produced by an interior organism, capable of reproducing others. The reproduction of living beings among themselves, if it were left to chance, would be as incomprehensible as a clock constructed by itself, constructing other clocks, and capable of indefinite reproduction."[4]

Nothing proves the finality of a living being better than the difference of sex. The reason for this difference is the future act which is one day to unite them for an instant, to provide for the conservation of the species. Now, this union is only possible where there is perfect conformity of

[1] Official report on "The progress of physiology."
[2] Cl. Bernard, "Introduction to the Study of Experimental Physics," p. 163.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 161.
[4] "Les Causes Finales."

form and structure already existing, and adapted for the purpose intended. The physical constitution of the male or female matters nothing to their present state. Their organic adaptation is prepared with regard to the future, and that alone. This is evidently their plan and scope. We must adopt the same conclusion if we consider the development of the embryo. All is directed to the future, as can be seen by reading books treating of this subject. It would be absurd to speak of chance or of a happy coincidence when we examine the eye, for instance, which is constructed like a perfect and most delicate optical instrument, subject to every modification which the diversity of its surroundings renders necessary, although the latter are in no way agents in the matter. Thus, in crustaceans and in certain insects the optical apparatus is an insulator, by its facets and cones, owing to the harmonious blending of many combinations which cannot possibly result from a fortuitous conglomeration of innumerable blind causes. It becomes convergent in the higher classes of animals, whose eyes are exactly similar to the lens of a camera obscura. The organs of sound are modified according as the animal has to live in the air or under water. The two systems are never inverted, nor do they meet by chance, either in the air or under water. No mechanical cause can account for the position of the ear, so perfectly appropriate to its different uses. In the same way the respiratory apparatus transforms itself according as the animal has to dwell in the air or under water. In the former case it is pulmonary, in the latter bronchial. And as to the structure of the heart, who could rationally assert that a mechanism, at once so simple and so complicated, is not the result of a preconceived design? It would otherwise necessitate the supposition that a physical cause, acting upon given laws, met, without seeking it, a system which is the best adapted to favour the circulation of the blood, while other equally blind causes were engaged in producing the blood and making it flow, in virtue of other laws, through these channels so cleverly arranged for it.[1] A glance at the marvellous structure of our body teaches us that the God of the universe is not far

[1] See, on these questions, M. Janet's "Final Causes."

away from each one of us—*Non longe ab unoquoque nostrum.* "There is not a machine of any kind which is not met with in the human frame," says Bossuet. The construction of the human body, the mobility of its form and stature, and the grace and suppleness of its limbs, cannot be reconciled with the hypothesis of an unintelligent cause. The organs of which the body is composed harmonise perfectly, and the functions they perform surpass all the refinements of chemistry, and the most delicate mechanism. Galen, after having dissected a human body, exclaimed—"I have sung a hymn to the Divinity." This proof is admirably brought forward by Xenophon in his "Memorabilia." "Does it not seem to thee, Aristodemus," says Socrates, "that He who made men has given to each one his physical organs for a useful purpose?—eyes to see all that is visible, ears to hear all that could be heard. Should we know sweet from bitter, had not the tongue been created to discern taste? Is it not an act of prevision that our sight, which is located in so delicate an organ as the eye, should be provided with eyelids, which open when necessary and close during our sleep? Eyelashes protect our eyes from the wind, eyebrows form a thatch over our eyes, so that the perspiration, dropping from the head, cannot hurt them; our ears receive every sound without ever being filled; the mouth, through which we take our food, is placed near to our eyes and nostrils; while the channels for the evacuations which disgust us are removed as far as possible from the other organs. All this work shows great forethought, and can you doubt whether it should be ascribed to chance or to a superior intelligence?" "No! by Jupiter!" answers Aristodemus, "all this, on close inspection, resembles perfectly the work of some wise artist, who is a friend to all living beings."[1]

Finally, from a physiological point of view, all the different parts of man's organism are united in mutual inter-dependence, producing thus the whole body; and in this way an admirable analogy is established between that organism and the grand physico-chemical laws which regulate cosmic life. The nervous system forms the compensatory balance between every gain and loss.

[1] "Memorabilia," Book I., Chap. iv.

There is an account regulating the outlay and the income, so as to maintain the quantity of water necessary to the human body. As to the calorific function which regulates the quantity of oxygen necessary for the manifestation of life, there are arrangements for it of a not less marvellous character. Such are the teachings which result from really impartial science.[1] Read the treatises showing the marvellous adaptation between the bodily organs and the two great functions of nutrition and reproduction, as also the function of that great distributor of physical life called the nervous system. No one can surpass Bossuet on the subject of the perfection of the human organism.[2]

Finality shows itself in living beings in a manner absolutely striking. Every animal is a most complicated system in itself. Human industry constructs machines in order to accomplish its operations, and life, with its animal functions, is nothing but the working of its ready-made machines.

The adversaries of final causes say that everything is explained by those properties which each living creature possesses as necessary to fulfil its own functions, and that these properties produce the organs and their functions. We reply that the simple elements of which an organic being is composed are cells. Now the production of a cell, as completely distinct from brute matter, cannot be explained by the simple development of organic life. Granted that the simple elements of the organised body possess certain properties, this fact does not exclude an intelligent cause, for such properties in themselves cannot explain the disposition of the organs. The development of organs through the mere using of them is impossible in ordinary cases, since the said organs, before their complete development, are totally unfitted for the function for which they are supposed to be destined later. Bianconi remarks that the forms of transition are like tools, without any intrinsic mechanical value. A monkey's foot, while undergoing the process of development into a man's, would be of no use whatever. Besides, how can we admit as the cause of certain com-

[1] Cl. Bernard, "Lessons on the Phenomena of Life," p. 113.
[2] "Treatise on the Knowledge of God and of ourself," Part II.

plicated and marvellous acts the blind influence of exterior environment, combined with interior tendencies no less blind? Can the stomach, for example, feel the necessity of complicating itself to carry on the process of rumination? When light acts agreeably on a nerve, can it transform the latter into a retina, and will it present to the eye, so suddenly improvised, all the parts of the optical apparatus which enable it to reveal the exterior world to man? It is possible, if necessary, to explain the mechanism of the heart by the simple contractibility of that muscle, but we know full well that no machine was ever invented by science more ingenious or more complex. Besides, it is not sufficient to take each separate organ of a living being —we must also ascertain that they are all linked together, and tend to one common end. Finally, the organ does not of itself perform its functions, since the function announces itself before the organ is formed. We do not deny that the function requires certain favourable exterior conditions, otherwise deviations might occur without, however, proving anything against the directing action. "It is a mistake to imagine that the final cause is in contradiction with the efficient cause, and that it triumphs the more when it has not the means or elements suitable for its realisation. In that case, it would be a continuous miracle. Nothing is more conformable to the idea we ought to have on the subject than the use of the most appropriate means to realise the end in view."[1] The final and the efficient causes must not be divided. The efficient cause produces harmony, because the primary and final cause, which is both free and intelligent, has preceded and directed it.

III.

But the marvels of human life are specially observed in the intelligence of man, and in the greatness of his moral sense, which complete and crown this series of phenomena.[2] Transformism, which seeks to make man the last term in a series of evolutions that have taken place in the organic

[1] Janet, "Final Causes," Book I., Chap. iv.

[2] See "Primates," by Gratiolet. Nothing tells more strongly against the simian origin of man.

world, has endeavoured to prove that man descends from the monkey, and the monkey from the Bathybius. Without discussing the strangeness of such a man as this, both fatherless and motherless, proceeding from another species by evolution, we find that philosophy is less favourable than science to man's descent from the beast. Is he, then, a distinct being, or a perfected animal, proceeding, like the rest, from the primordial polypus? Materialists begin by showing the analogies which exist between the operations of man and those of animals. They say to the spiritualist—"You declare that the existence of a soul is necessary to explain what you call the intellectual life. Well, there are animals in which we admit that intellectual life is inferior to that of man, but it would be absurd to pretend that they are wholly devoid of it, for they present irrefutable proofs of high intelligence. Animals possess feelings of affection. There are dogs which have formed a marvellous attachment for their masters. The actions of animals are certainly not simply mechanical. We are told that the acts of the intellect are more perfect; but is not man's nervous organisation more perfect? Why do you refuse a soul to the brute?"

It is evident that this graduated scale, from man to beast, is a difficulty, and the scholastics, understanding the objection long ago, endowed beasts with a soul, rather than refuse one to man. According to them, the soul was an immaterial principle of existence. An animal having no free will has no future life; its soul perishes with the body. The Cartesian spiritualists do not admit the existence of a soul in animals. "What you call soul," they say, "is only a more developed brain. By degrees, as the brain becomes more perfect, the scale of thought rises. Thought depends on the brain."

Montaigne wrote—"There is more difference between one man and another than there is between a man and an animal;" and Bossuet "could not help pitying such a *bel esprit*, whether he said so foolish a thing seriously, or whether he jested upon so grave a matter." The difference between the nature of a man and that of a beast is apparent to all. Man is a reflecting being. From a psychological point of view, the greatest difference

between man's intelligence and that of animals is the faculty of generalising and abstracting. Hence, all sciences and philosophy, as well as all classifications in systems of natural history, and all generalisations in human science are derived. Man reconstructs the world within his philosophical scaffoldings. He knows how to people the ideal regions of the drama or romance with beings more real than those of flesh and blood. What are the mathematics of Archimedes compared to those of our polytechnic students? This argument is very forcible when opposed to that system of evolution which makes man descend from an animal ancestry, for the faculty of abstracting and generalising in man implies the existence of a soul of a superior nature. Man can also modify his feelings when acted upon by an external impression. "He can turn off the steam as the mechanic does in the engine." Something happens which excites us to anger, or gives us pain, and we can meet the provocation with a smile or with disdain. *Etiam impavidum!* No animal could do so. And what more decisive proof is there than the language of man, so different from that of animals? Theirs is simply emotional, his is rational; a language which cannot be explained by universal ideas, and pre-supposes liberty. Man can dissimulate, an animal cannot, neither can it lie; the language of animals does not change, whereas the forms of human speech are innumerable. Another very strong proof against the animal descent of man is his indefinite perfectibility. Man has ever gone on progressing since the first traces of his appearance on earth. The son of any savage can be civilised and educated,[1] but the offspring of an animal never can. It is bound by its instincts, always moving, as it were, in an iron track; it ignores the secrets of other beings, and goes peacefully to sleep between its evening meal and that of the next day. God governs its animal instincts. Man, on the contrary, improves and invents;

[1] The Benedictines at New Nursia, under a Bishop-Abbot, the Right Rev. Rudesind Salvado, O.S.B., who devote themselves to the civilisation of the South Australian aborigines, have attained a high measure of success in the education and mental cultivation of that low type of humanity. Some of their pupils prove that in mental capacity they are not far inferior to the higher races.

he alone has the power of reflecting upon himself. "Two things," says Bossuet, "give rise to inventions—our reflections and our freedom. Man has made for himself both tools and weapons."[1] Herein lies, according to Bossuet, all the difference between man and beast. Reflection and comparison are necessary for invention, and man alone is endowed with these faculties. What wonderful results have been the fruit of his incomparable mind. He has mastered the three kingdoms of nature; by fire and iron he has actually worked changes in our very planet; he has hewn down great forests in some places, and covered other parts of the globe with trees; with iron and wooden ships he has braved the winds and the waves. Two polished glasses suffice to enable him to penetrate the vault of the heavens. He studies the habits of animals and masters them. He analyses the atmosphere and makes it subservient to the balloons of his aeronauts. He can guide the lightning in its course. He has replaced the silent lance, which could only take effect in a hand-to-hand fight, by the thunders of artillery, projecting destructive bombshells over great distances. In commercial transactions he has substituted for ill-paved roads and jolting chariots, railroads, electric cars, and marvellous steam-engines. All these various inventions, and countless others, bear the impress of a high order of intelligence and prove the greatness of man. It is certain that he treats nature as his subject, and acts as her ruler. Nothing seems too daring for the *audax Japeti genus*, which has left no experiment untried. If men of the Middle Ages, such as Villehardouin, Froissart, and Joinville, could come back and see what goes on in our day, they would imagine themselves to be in another world. But the separation between man and the animal creation can readily be developed until it becomes an enormous abyss. Man lives in the midst of society; he has organised the magistracy, the priesthood, and the army. He has discovered four great styles in architecture, and has raised up incomparable structures, and, above all, our beautiful cathedrals. Not within thousands of years could the monkey ever build a cathedral,

[1] Bossuet himself could not be explained by the principle of evolution.

nor even so much as a cabin in which to shelter itself against the rain or frost.[1] Again, man has a sense of the beautiful; he knows what it is to love, to be virtuous, and to be patriotic. But, above all, it is man alone that has always possessed moral and religious sentiment, but never has the slightest manifestation of the sense of repentance or religion been observed in any other animal. In man this idea is universal. He is ready to sacrifice his life to an idea, or to a principle, superior to matter. "The experience of animal history," says M. Vacherot,[2] "proves that there is not the least sign of morality or religious feeling in animals, even of the highest orders. The experience of man's history, on the contrary, has established the fact that these characteristics have never failed in any of the various branches of our race, even in those which approach the most nearly to the brute kingdom, and who have been closely observed by travellers in Central Africa, and in the most uncivilised islands of Oceania. Thus no animal has, or ever can have, religious instincts, no matter what its natural superiority or its progressive training may be. Every man is, and must ever remain, possessed of some moral and religious sentiment, whatever his natural superiority or his degradation may be. This is attested by experience everywhere and at all times without the least exception."[3] It is an ascertained fact. "If men believe that they have a soul, it is not by virtue of philosophical systems, it is by virtue of religion." "One unique characteristic," says the Abbé de Broglie, "separates man absolutely from the rest of the animal creation, and that is his moral conscience and his religious sentiment. Intelligent animals are to be met with up to a certain point, but none of them possess in the slightest degree a sense of morality or an idea of the Divinity. These two ideas combined are rooted in the very foundations of the human soul.

[1] Some of the anthropoid apes, such as the orang of Borneo, construct rude platforms among the branches of trees, on which they sleep. Chimpanzees collect straw, leaves, etc., out of which they make a bed upon the ground. But these constructions are less ingenious than the nest of a harvest-mouse, and provide no protection against the elements. (See "The Anthropoid Apes," by R. Hartmann, and "The Human Species," by A. de Quatrefages.)

[2] *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1st December, 1886.

[3] *Ibid.*

They are instinctive in our race, and this instinct can no more deceive than can any other instinct. Whence then comes man's dignity? Simply from this—that he alone, of all the beings we know, possesses reason, conscience, and virtue, things which are not to be measured by any such scientific standards as the 'centimetre, gramme, or second,' but which are worth more than the whole extent of the heavens, together with the total mass of nebulae and planets that move therein, with their infinite rotations and translations; again, man's dignity consists in his knowledge of the world he inhabits, the history and description of which he alone can give; in the discoveries he has made, and continues to make, of the secrets of nature; in the power he exercises over all creation notwithstanding his physical insignificance; in the marvels of industry which he draws from nature, for instance, the magic harmony of sound and of colour; and in the application of these to animate and portray his thoughts, to produce in himself and in his equals the most soul-stirring and ravishing emotions. In a word, man's dignity consists in this, that he alone can solve the problem of the origin of things and raise himself towards his Creator; and still more does it consist in his being master of his own actions, and able to employ his strength and his moral faculties in the attainment of some end desired. In fine, his greatness consists principally in those moral struggles which develop his incomparable heroism, when justice combats unjust might and conscience governs passion."[1]

"The religious sentiment," remarks M. Brunetière, "has this peculiar feature, that the higher we ascend in the history of the human race, the larger and deeper is the place which it occupies in the human soul." Doubtless this feeling becomes purer and more spiritualised with the development of civilisation, but all its strength flows from its origin. The conclusion is manifest. If man be descended from an animal, if he and it are blended one in the other, then it is exactly at the moment in which he should have most closely resembled the gorilla or the chimpanzee that

[1] Abbé de Broglie, "The Present and the Future of Catholicism in France," pp. 144, 145.

he differed most from them, namely, in the sense of religion essential to him. This argument proves, in a simple but decisive manner, the existence of a distinct human kingdom. Indeed, all the differential features between man and animals have a royal character, according to the much admired expression of M. de Quatrefages, "the characteristics of a sovereign." Thus, although from a physical point of view man resembles the animals, for he is restricted to a comparatively narrow region, and is ephemeral, yet in the world of thought he is essentially far removed from the animal kingdom, for he is both lord and master of the whole world. That noble impulse towards the Deity which all human beings feel is the true source of our innate greatness, and is that which counterbalances our physiological weakness.

IV.

When asking ourselves whence have come the world and life in its various degrees, we have concluded that they can have come only from God. This first proof of the existence of God, as clear as it is irrefutable, has been demonstrated by the principle of cause and finality; but the subject is far from being exhausted. Let us see whether the principle of final causes can furnish us with other proofs, no less decisive, of the existence of God.[1]

The proof by finality of the existence of God is the most popular proof *par excellence*, the one which has struck all men at all times as decisive and as the high road to truth for simple souls. This spiritualistic argument does not date from yesterday. Aristotle was the first who studied final causes with scientific precision.[2] In all that concerns final and formal causes his great mind can never be surpassed; it is the greatest, perhaps, that the human race has ever produced in the metaphysical order. The principle of finality is one of those ideas which Pascal relegated to an inferior part of the savant's brain, but which Leibnitz pronounced to be "the light of all science." No argument awakens our common sense and arouses the sympathy of our hearts more vividly. "Man," says Ozanam, "cannot

[1] Read Fonsegrives' "La Causalité Efficiente."
[2] See "Aristotle and the Christian Church," by Br. Azarias.

perceive the order which reigns in the universe without a feeling akin to the joy of a son who regains the traces of his lost father."[1]

We are now about to search the universe in order to discover whether materialism, on the supposition that it was founded to affirm the existence of things, can give us a sufficient explanation thereof by maintaining that beyond the realm of chemical elements and their combinations absolutely nothing exists. Our investigation, in order to be conclusive, implies that we accept all the duly authenticated results of scientific research, and that we acknowledge, without reserve, their authority in this domain. Evidently there is only question of a succinct exposition of the decisive points between us and the scientists.[2]

The strongest and the most sensible argument which Theism can develop to demonstrate the necessity of a First Cause, all-powerful and intelligent, is the general organisation of the matter which composes the world. This is the cosmos, the splendour of all things visible, *la bellezza del mondo*, of which Leonardo da Vinci spoke; the arrangement of the things destined for the accomplishment of plans which are unknown to the universe itself.

One of the most striking proofs drawn from finality is, in the first place, the pageantry of the heavenly bodies. "The heavens," as the Psalmist tells us, "bear witness to the Eternal."[3] The "starry heavens," of which Kant speaks; the regular courses of the stars, calculated with such geometrical precision; the mechanism which sets all this immense expanse of beauty in motion—who has made and who directs all this? Who has sown the firmament with such flowers? How can the working of the great wheels of the sidereal world be explained without the intervention of a Superior Intelligence, called "the Great Admiral" by an ancient philosopher, Sextus Empiricus, and

[1] Ozanam's "Letters."

[2] It should always be borne in mind that assertion without proof is mere dogmatism which fails to carry conviction. *Quod gratis asseritur gratis negatur* is an ancient and universally accepted principle. Until proofs are offered there can be no discussion and no conviction; nothing, in fact, but assertion on one side and contradiction on the other.

[3] *Coeli enarrant gloriam Dei, et opera manuum ejus annuntiat firmamentum* (Ps. xviii. 1). "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth the work of His hands."

by Newton "the Great Mechanic, the Great Geometrician"? Consider the small number of the springs which set this immense machinery in motion. One and the same force, *i.e.*, attraction, suffices to explain the course of the heavens and the greater part of the varied movements of our earth, the stability of the whole, and the union of the minor parts. Without an all-ruling, directing Mind it would be impossible to account for those gigantic and impassable worlds, scattered across the yawning and luminous voids of space, which they traverse with swift and endless gyrations. These chained and docile monsters follow their track in a wonderfully complicated network of orbits and various movements. The force which guides them is so gentle that they seem to us to be balanced like lamps in the sky. In the beginning there must have been an infinity of combinations possible between atoms. Is there any one who can be made to believe that it was by mere chance that these atoms ascended the necessary scale of combinations to produce the marvellous harmonies and effects we now witness? Moreover, can we count the stars which the telescope reveals to us in the vast field of the heavens? We cannot even make the attempt, so great is their number.[1]

Moreover, all the stars are placed at incredible distances both from the earth and from each other. If we take for the basis of a triangle a straight line of fifty-seven million leagues as the distance of the sun from the earth, the distance of the star nearest to our earth is two hundred thousand times this distance.[2] "Whichever way we turn,"

[1] Et tous ces tas de pierreries
Qu'on nomme constellations;
Et ce monde, esquif sans voiles,
Et, dans le grand ciel sans milieu,
Toute cette cendre d'étoiles.
—"Contemplations," V. Hugo, iii. 30.

[2] In the last conference on "Newly-discovered Stars," held at Paris, the lecturer called the attention of his hearers to the enormous distance which exists between the stars and our poor planet. He supposed a railway to be opened between our earth and the Centaur constellation. Admitting first-class tickets to be sold at one penny for every ten kilometres, the Public Debt of the French Republic would not suffice to pay the journey, and the following colloquy would take place between the Traveller and the Ticket-clerk. Traveller—"I want a ticket for Centaur. How much is it?" Guard—"Forty-four thousand millions of francs." Traveller—"How long will the journey last?" Guard—"Forty-eight million years." "Remember," adds the lecturer, "we are in an express train going at the rate of a hundred kilometres an hour!"

says Lucretius, "right, left, up, or down, there is no limit to this vast universe." The more we are lost in the midst of these immeasurable distances, the more it behoves us to contemplate a Being greater even than all this immensity. Pascal used to exclaim—"The silence of these infinite spaces terrifies me."

Here, then, we have the perfection of regularity ruling matter, subjecting it to fixed laws; we have the stars, the distance and size of which alarm us, yet their movements are better regulated than the most perfect clock. Everything above is produced in measure and time, so much so that, by calculation, we can follow and determine the movements of the heavenly bodies, and foresee the appearance of the most distant planets, and announce the return of the comet, which suddenly displays its fiery tail. And why should we not look upon the scientific geometry and the mathematics ruling the heavens as divine? As in Scipio's dream, do not the moving orbs bring us the echo of a heavenly symphony, of a canticle to the glory of Him who has blended together a variety of things and elements in an accord which nothing can disturb? We cannot do otherwise than admire, whether we will or not; we must necessarily look up to that Power ruling the universe, who was spoken of by Plato in his myth of the Republic; that Sovereign of the spheres turning eternally its immense spindle in the midst of space, whose revolutions form the orbits of the planets, and whose golden nails are the stars. At the sight of these immeasurable stars, lit by the hand of God "stirring the acclamations of the sons of Heaven," we commune in thought with Him who fixed their laws. We reflect on these myriads of worlds sailing noiselessly in the same tracks and in regular order, all describing the most perfect, beautiful orbits, revolving on themselves and round each other, as in the measured step of some ancient dance. They revolve in empty space. Who then could have placed in the stars that force which attracts them, and which, at the very moment when it may prove fatal, by hurling them one against the other, is neutralised by an opposing force? What was the first cause of

these movements? Was it not a divine impulsion, a "fillip with the hand," as Leibnitz wittily expresses it, to communicate motion to the stars? Yes; we say so unhesitatingly. God was the cause. It was He who gave the first impulse to this movement. An atom can defy our orders, but God moves the universe without addressing even a word to it. The learned acknowledge this, and their conviction has not been a sudden inspiration, as with poets and mystics. It is by scientific research, and by the aid of mathematics, that the wondrous order and regularity, such as chance could never have organised, are made evident to the scientist.

If the world of great things is so surprising, if we see the name of God written in letters of fire in the alphabet of the heavens, the world of infinitesimally small things is no less marvellous a revelation, a revelation indeed that cannot be fathomed. The microscope is quite as bewildering as the telescope. Infinitesimal animalcules cover the surface of the earth as well as the bottom of the sea, and it is impossible to state their numerical proportion even approximately. With what rapidity do not the spores of mushrooms produce the cap, composed of millions of cells, similar to the primitive spore, and these cells again are formed in one night, when favoured by the dampness and electric conditions of the atmosphere. The asparagus, with the same extraordinary intensity, produces, in twenty-four hours, a "head," composed of a thousand million cells, many of which differ from the rest. Cohn found that two hours would suffice for two segments of a bacterium to attain the dimensions of their parent and become prolific in their turn. Thus, in three days, the progeny of one individual would number 4772 billions, and weigh 7500 tons. Crumble a piece of chalk weighing a pound, and the powder will be found, under the microscope, to consist of the remains of ten millions of beings. Place one drop of stagnant water under your microscope and you will discover therein a population of infusoria equivalent in number to all the human beings upon earth.[1] Such calculations bewilder our imagination.

[1] The mites in a fragment of cheese can hardly be seen with the naked eye, and yet they are of enormous size in comparison with some other living organisms viewed under a powerful microscope. See Sir William Thompson's article in *Nature*, p. 551, 1870.

How, then, can we explain the regular operations of nature, without the idea of a God who has pre-ordained all things? Days and nights and the alternate seasons return in the same regular order; vegetation in winter becomes dormant but awakes in spring, and begins the same process over again at exactly the same periods. Every year spring presents us with its flowers, summer with its sheaves, and autumn with its fruits. Each season returns with its gifts; never does nature commit a fault of memory. Moreover, the Great God, with whom we are now occupied, did not create the world like a museum of natural history, wherein everything is classified and ticketed, but He ordered all things with incomparable variety and freedom. The spectacle of nature and the world of things is replete with diversities and unexpected sights. There is nothing so beautiful or that sings the praises of God to so sweet a melody as the green forest, the blue sea, and the towering mountain; *mirabilis in altis Dominus;* the eternal snows; the high peaks, now flooded with light, now dark with lowering storms; the deep valleys; the firm and well-planned structure of our mountain ranges down whose slopes the streams descend in roaring torrents; the dainty cascades mingling their foam and spray; our planet itself, like a frail bark launched in the skies, replete with germination; the sap circulating through the bark of the trees; the plants exhaling their sweet fragrance; the internal fires bursting through the volcanoes; the rustling leaves of the trees, whispering in endless converse; the voice of the wind and the roaring of the thunder through space—all this fills us with indescribable emotion, as if we were in presence of the very soul of nature. "It is the same hand which carved the rocks, moulded the suns, and painted the wing of the butterfly in hues of azure, topaz, ruby, and emerald; which made the forests with their foliage; and produced the varied play of light and shadow, colour and perfume. The waves of the sea, the lightning's flash, and each flame from the eye of man are to me but a transparency through which I gaze upon the exquisite charm of the beauty of God! The Universe bears, as it were, the sign-manual of the Creator, and the impress of

the Divine Workman's royal seal."[1]

> Yes! in this world of ours all speaks
> And nought exists without its eloquence.
>
> We read in all these things the Name of Him
> Who makes the fruit to ripen and to grow;
> Who gives to all, and each in his own measure,
> The calm night's cold, the bright day's light and glow.[2]

And again—Who compressed the mighty trees, as well as the delicate little herbs, into their small seeds? Who wove the innumerable tissues of their roots, stems, branches, leaves, and flowers? Who opens all the pores by which a plant takes in air and moisture? Who communicates to the bloom its fertilising power? What shall we say of the incessant exchange between the animal and the vegetable kingdoms? The plants disintegrate the mineral matters for assimilation by animals, which, in turn, reintegrate and restore them to the soil whence they came. In the mineral kingdom we also find laws. The atoms which produce the crystal, with its determined forms, are not united by chance; they reproduce a pattern, they have been cast in an ideal mould. Thus do the various kingdoms of nature correspond. Between all beings there is harmonious action which impels and directs them towards a common end. Intellect evidently presided over these combinations. That finality which appears in the whole manifests itself also in every detail, and with such evidence that we can only escape it by obliterating all analogies. To insist on doing so would only be to expose one's self to the reproach of Arnobius—"It is not less foolish to combat follies than to advocate them."[3]

This proof of final causes is one of common sense. It is by the same process of reasoning that we both affirm the reality of God's existence by inference from the harmony we see throughout in the universe, and that we consider our fellow-men to be intelligent beings when we hear them converse together rationally. Were this proceeding not lawful in the first case, how could it be so in the second? This is a very simple remark, and yet it suffices to close the

[1] "Nouveaux entretiens et Discours," par le P. Vaudon, p. 6.
[2] "Esther," Racine.
[3] "Disputations," vol. i., p. 10.

lips of such as contest the demonstrative rigour of the proof of final causes. Man, before studying any systems, believes in God instinctively. The general aspect of creation suggests God to him. When a child who is learning his catechism is told that God has made all that meets his eye he believes quite naturally. The human race agrees with the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews—"Every house is built by some man, but He that created all things is God." "My religion is very simple," said Napoleon one day to Monge. "I look out upon the universe, so vast, complicated, and magnificent, and I say to myself, this cannot be the work of chance, but it is the work of an unknown Being, who must be all-powerful, and as superior to man as the universe is superior to our best machinery. You may search, Monge, and get your friends the mathematicians and the philosophers to help you, but you will never find a stronger or more serious reason for belief, and do what you will to combat it, you will never invalidate it."[1] Fénelon, at the commencement of his "Treatise on the existence of God," supposes himself to have been taken to a desert island, where he discovers a statue, and exclaims—"There must have been men here before. I recognise here the hand of a talented sculptor. I admire the nicety with which he has proportioned all the parts of this body, so as to give it so much beauty, grace, majesty, and life." We, too, should take our stand before some wonderful piece of mechanism. We see a fire that gives heat, water boiling, steam setting several pistons in motion which communicate with numerous wheels. We inquire at once—"Where is the mechanic?" or, "Who invented this?" We see a picture, and we ask—"Who is the artist?" When we hear beautiful music we at once inquire about the composer. Voltaire wrote—"To affirm that the eye is not made to see, nor the ear to hear, nor the stomach to digest food, would be the most monstrous absurdity, and the most revolting stupidity which ever beset a human mind. Sceptical as I am, I declare such to be evident madness, for so it appears to me."[2] And he continues—"If a clock proves the existence of a clockmaker, and the world does

[1] Thiers, "The Consulate," vol. iii., p. 220.
[2] "Philosophical Dictionary."

not prove the existence of a Supreme Architect, I consent to be called 'Cause finalier,' that is to say, a fool." This proof, which seemed so decisive to Voltaire, was also the only one that inspired Kant with respect. Newton reasoned much in the same style. After having explained the laws of light and its undulations, he asked himself whether the eye could have been made by one who was without any knowledge of optics, and the ear by one without knowledge of the laws of sound. "You conclude," said he, "that I possess an intelligent soul, because you perceive a certain order in my words and thoughts. Judge, then, when you see the order and regularity existing in the world, that a being sovereignly intelligent must exist."[1] "I have seen God," says Linnæus, "passing before me, as He did before Moses. I saw Him, and I became mute with astonishment and admiration. I have found in all creation traces of His footsteps; and in His works, even in the least of them, power, wisdom, and indescribable perfection."[2]

These quotations prove to us that not only is the proof of finality the proof *par excellence* for unsophisticated minds, but that it strikes the greatest intellects no less forcibly. Both one and the other easily perceive that the universe cannot be its own cause, and that on all sides there are evident traces of a definite design. The idea of design leads to that of intelligence, and the vision of the end in view leads back to the organising thought. This prodigious and, at the same time, minute organisation of the visible world attests the universal presence of the Sovereign Intelligence, which alone could conceive such marvels, and can alone assure their duration. Machines constructed by the genius of man require incessant watchfulness and careful guidance. Can it then be supposed that the machinery of our world, in which the smallest deviation would produce an incalculable cataclysm, is the work of mere chance? Could it possibly exist through some blind force, or fortuity, which would ignore, at the same time, both what it had brought forth and what it keeps alive? The plainest common sense would exclude belief in any such folly. God takes possession of our minds

[1] "Elements of Philosophy," Part I, Chap. i.
[2] Quoted by the editor of "The Reason of Christianity."

through every molecule of matter if we know how to look upon nature with an attentive eye. Those are very much to be pitied who say with Hegel—"Stars are only a shining leprosy on heaven's surface." This expression, attributed to Hegel by M. Heine, shows the bitter disappointment which Hegelianism had engendered in the heart of its author. "One can understand," says M. Chevreul, "that a man may attain to such a mental condition as to doubt, honestly, the existence of God. But to declare dogmatically, *ex cathedra*, and peremptorily that He does not exist, is simply to close one's eyes to an accumulation of facts completely opposed to materialism."[1] Napoleon I. used to say—"It is not every one who wants that can make himself an atheist." He meant that man believes in God instinctively, and cannot turn atheist without a violent effort of his own will.

Thus we acknowledge, through the calculations of our intellect, the great plans of the Sovereign Mind that rules the world. We perceive an universal mathematical system everywhere—in the orbits of the heavenly bodies, in the circulation of the blood in animals and of the sap in plants, in the invisible undulations of the waves of light, of sound, and of the ether of space, and in the impalpable movements of molecules.[2] The harmony of all living beings on our planet with the earth that nourishes, and the heavens that give them light, with the sun and the whole sphere of the stars, is a marvel which we feel at times by intuition. Our darkened mind is enlightened, our stony hearts are softened, and we exclaim, almost in spite of ourselves—"O Thou Almighty One! Magnificent Eternal Being, Creator of all things, teach all men to know and love Thee."

It is, then, impossible for a man who observes and reflects to believe, when he sees universal order reigning

[1] Read Caro on "Materialism and Science."

[2] Lockyer says that the stones of which St. Paul's Cathedral is built consist of millions upon millions of small particles called molecules, and that although St. Paul's Cathedral seems to be so absolutely at rest, as if it would last for ever, and although each particular stone seems equally so, yet, when you get down into the intimate structure of each stone, and of every part of the fabric, you find nothing but a multitudinous ocean of motion. What appears to us solid and at rest is absolutely in a perpetual state of unrest—in fact, the stability consists in its state of unrest.

in the world, that all is directed by blind chance or by universal unconsciousness. If ever, for one single moment, universal absolute unconsciousness existed, we should be obliged to explain how consciousness was first formed, and how it is that we now see in the world order, guidance, adaptations, and final causes.

The existence of finality is so perfectly evident that it is even admitted by its adversaries, but they interpret it in a very strange manner.[1] Monsieur Littré gets over the difficulty by saying—"Matter has, in itself, the faculty of accommodating and fitting itself to its ends." This is an admission, but, as Montaigne used to say—"Here we have a sort of spinning wheel." The vicious circle is obvious! This faculty of adaptation strikingly resembles the "dormant virtues" and others which Molière has destroyed for ever. Laws do not explain everything; their own origin has to be explained, as also their adaptation to certain ends, and to a plan visible in all phenomena. You assert that laws are immutable. We agree with you; but, instead of concluding that these laws are able to account for themselves, we derive the inference from them that the very order they reveal supposes the existence of a Supreme Legislator. Who is to pronounce judgment here? Reason will do so, for an experimental verification would have no other result than to confirm over again the exactitude of the facts already observed. What it would be necessary for matter to prove, would be the incompatibility between the idea of an intelligent cause and the order of the world maintained by fixed laws. "Laws govern, and yet they are themselves slaves."[2] "It is just as absurd," says Proudhon, "to refer the system of the universe to physical laws, without any regard to the commanding Ego, as to attribute the victory of Marengo to strategical combinations without taking the first Consul into account."[3]

Rénan solves the problem by saying that "in the beginning nothing existed, and in the course of time the world became something. There is a central conscience in the universe, which forms itself progressively, and its

[1] See the "Refutation of the Objections against Finality in Living Beings," which enters into this more general objection, p. 12.
[2] Duke of Argyll, "The Reign of Law," p. 127.
[3] "Système des contradictions économiques," prologue.

future growth is unlimited. Two elements, time and a tendency to progress, produce the order of the world. A kind of interior impulse—a tendency—draws everything into existence, and onwards to an ever-developing life. Nature has played at 'Blind man's buff'; it has sought for a long time to thread the needle. Everything is attained, and through the infinite number of accidents and coincidents that occur, everything seems to be the effect of a Will, which is really the work of chance."[1] At first M. Rénan and those of his school of thought imagined they were only using metaphors. By degrees they formulated a doctrine, giving to blind nature inclinations, tastes, and a will. This blind nature selects, disposes, and operates at will. They talk about the "laws and works of nature" and of her "freaks and errors." "Nature," they say, "possesses creative and artistic instincts." M. Taine explains everything by declaring that "at the summit of all things there is an Eternal Axiom, of which the prolonged reverberations compose, by their inexhaustible undulations, the immensity of the universe—an immortal and creative formula, omnipotent and eternal, which nothing can exhaust."[2]

According to these philosophers, God is the term of the successive evolutions of matter. God is non-existent. He makes Himself. Some day He will really exist! But who can prove that God does not exist? No doubt brute matter requires an unlimited time in order to be organised, so as to pass through the gradations of vegetable, animal, and intelligent life, and finally to become God! But the world, being eternal, must surely have already reached "the term of its evolutions"; and, if matter "contains within itself the principle of perfection," why has it taken so long to attain this perfect state? What cause has opposed its progress if nothing exists beyond itself? And if nature "possesses within itself a superior principle," why is not everything in the universe life? Why is there

[1] Letter to M. Berthelot, "The Priest of Nemi," *passim.*

[2] "French Philosophy in the Nineteenth Century." All this is, as a matter of fact, so much empty verbiage, which conveys nothing clear, definite, or satisfactory to the mind of any intelligent inquirer. Few thoughtful students would consider an "Axiom" a profitable exchange for a living and intelligent First Cause, Himself alone uncaused, as the Author of all things.

any brute matter? Why is intelligence the privilege of only a few out of the mass of living things? All ought to be life and intelligence in the universe, if matter has already attained the period of its development. If the universe be subject to change, that proves it is not its own cause and end. Nature evidently had not at her disposal an indefinite number of opportunities for perfecting herself; for, had that been the case, after each unsuccessful combination, the atoms would have separated in order to make a new attempt. Is not this a *reductio ad absurdum?* Shall we then suppose that blind nature succeeded at her first attempt? But all combinations are so complicated that man, with all his genius and his marvellous apparatus, has never yet succeeded in perfecting his inventions at the first attempt. Then why should chance have proved more successful than man? And this not only once, but thousands of millions of times, for each of the myriads of living beings that compose the universe? Irregularity is the constant characteristic of chance. No one draws the same number twenty or a hundred times running. Yet nature has been drawing the same number running for thousands of centuries. We might repeat with Galiani—"Nature is lucky." These are inconsistencies of speech. We cannot conceive a being, endowed with Divine attributes, who is not God. "An universal nature," said Leibnitz, "would be a kind of idol."

Materialists object that the creative instinct of nature is so dependent on fortuitous and exterior circumstances that this often gives rise to most absurd productions. Nature is sometimes a prey to a needless—nay, even a harmful—fecundity, and is powerless to avoid or surmount the least obstacle which comes in her way. When checked in her course by accidents from without, she commits numberless mistakes, and her freaks, *lusus naturae*, are ridiculous. Could this occur if there were a God and finality? We are shown an array of cases in which nature has acted in a manner contrary to those ends which alone strike us as the ones intended. In other words, this means that in an indefinite number of cases we cannot understand the full scope of nature. This is true. Is there a metaphysician or a theologian who would attempt to give a reason for all

phenomena? Their scope may be above and beyond our intelligence, but how can it be proved that they have no scope at all? In the question of final causes negative facts indicate not the absence of God, but our limited intelligence. Positive facts have quite another value. If it be true that the inorganic world cannot in certain cases be explained by final causes, it remains no less an established fact that finality alone can explain it in most other cases. Moreover, we have seen that the organic world is inexplicable without finality. Now, if finality exists in a single instance, we must conclude that it exists in others, even where we cannot point to it. Mr. Mill maintains the right of each person to form his own opinion on the question of origins, conformably to the value he attaches to those analogies called "marks of design." "The value of those marks is a question for philosophy." [1]

And now for cataclysms, which would seem to imply that things go on by themselves. When they get on well, then all is well; but if there come a clash, then, alas! all goes wrong. Why should God permit cataclysms, if He exists and holds the laws in His hand? If, on the contrary, the laws reign supreme and are self-acting, we can well understand that accidents must occur. Voltaire made use of this idea in his poem on the "Disaster at Lisbon," and, in order to screen the scepticisms in his book, he says at the close—

> That one day all will be well is our hope,
> That all is well to-day is our illusion.

This is a serious objection, but it is easy to understand that the problem of cataclysms is interwoven with the problem of evil. Why does God permit evil? We leave this question aside when we are fully convinced by positive proofs that God exists. God alone knows His own secrets. There is no system without its difficulties and its inexplicable points. Man's reason is such that, if he is satisfied by one positive proof, he can afford to leave the rest alone, otherwise it would become impossible to affirm anything whatsoever. No doubt these cataclysms seem to favour atheism, and can be used in argument against God, but cataclysms are, on the whole, rare, and the progress of the world

[1] "A. Comte and S. Mill," by Littré.

provides certain evidence on the side of God.[1] This is our answer. Finally, materialists have no right to declare that no phenomenon is produced in space or in time outside the pale of physical laws and universal mechanism. Suppose materialists are mistaken—suppose man is free, conformably to his own experience—then there must exist a series of facts, completely inexplicable by mechanism, which must be reconciled with the immutability of laws, since the facts and the laws are co-existent. Does not the initiative of man insert his free act as a link in the chain of material causes? We can change, not the quantity, but the course of movement in the world. The immutability of the laws of nature is not more difficult to reconcile with the Existence of God than is universal mechanism incompatible with the liberty of man. The power we possess of modifying the series of physical facts is a faint type of the mode of action of a transcendent cause, in touching, in a manner that is infinitely subtle, the great wheels of the cosmic machine. Thus, supreme causality only achieves its great designs by making them concur with laws opposed to them, and we thus observe a wonderful accord between the material causes, the conditions of phenomena, and the final causes, which are at the same time both intentions and results.

The world proves to us the existence of an intelligent God. Only a conscious and intelligent being can form an intention. Moreover, the Scriptures present this proof as the most conclusive of all, under the plea that it would be the height of stupidity not to recognise the Supreme Intellect, which made and governs all things. "But all men are vain in whom there is not the knowledge of God;

[1] "There is no difficulty in admitting that God causes physical and retributive evil. He does not, indeed, intend even this kind of evil for its own sake, but He causes corruption and death, because they subserve the order and perfection of the universe. The power of God is manifested, and the beauty of the world is enhanced, by the constant changes which bring life out of death. So again God inflicts punishment, because His justice requires that sinners should suffer, and that fear of God's judgments should lead men to take refuge in His infinite love."—"A Catholic Dictionary," p. 358. I think this quotation provides material for a line of argument which disposes satisfactorily of the vulgar objections urged against God because of the evils and catastrophes which have a place in every human life. Men forget that the crucifix is not merely a representation of Christ crucified, it also represents the condition of every man born into this world, whether he will have it so or not. "It is appointed unto all men once to die," and to suffer during life before death in one way or another. Sufferings are beneficial to the higher nature of man when they are accepted and sanctified according to the Divine example and will.

and who, by these good things that are seen, could not understand Him that is, neither by attending to the works have acknowledged the workman, but have imagined either the fire or the wind, or the swift air, or the circle of the stars, or the great water, or the sun and moon, to be gods that rule the world; with whose beauty if they, being delighted, took them to be gods, let them know how much the Lord of them is more beautiful than they; for the first Author of beauty made all those things."—Wisdom xiii. 1, 2, 3. The Psalms observe, with that touch of shrewdness which so often appears in Holy Writ—"He that planted the ear, shall He not hear? or He that formed the eye, doth He not see?"—Ps. xciii. 9. St. Paul, in his discourse to the inhabitants of Lystra, in Lycaonia, points with confidence to the witness of the works of God; and, in order to confound polytheism, appeals to Him, who, amidst error and depravity, has not left Himself without witnesses—"Nevertheless He left not Himself without testimony, doing good from heaven, giving rains and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."—Acts xiv. 16. St. Paul says elsewhere—"For the invisible things of Him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made; His Eternal Power also, and Divinity; so that they are inexcusable."—Rom. i. 20. The wise sages of antiquity spoke in like manner. Every true philosopher, and every man who aspires to the title, should constantly bear in mind this admirable passage from Aristotle—"When a man came to proclaim the existence of an Intelligence which, in nature, as well as in animated beings, is the cause of the order and regularity that appear throughout the whole world, he left the impression of being the only one possessed of his senses, and of having remained sober, so to speak, after the extraordinary follies of his predecessors."[1] In expressing himself thus, Aristotle was not thinking of Socrates but of Anaxagoras. We have seen with what vigour and good sense Xenophon affirms his belief in an all-directing Mind. Plato expresses the same idea admirably in his "Republic"—"Man ought to rise from the view of contingent objects and elevate his whole soul to the luminous contemplation

[1] "Metaphysics," Book I., Chap. iii.

of the 'Being who is.'" Voltaire pronounced the following picturesque sentence on Lucretius, who denies final causes —"In matters of philosophy Lucretius knows a little less than a church beadle. Cicero, who doubted everything else, never had a doubt as to final causes."[1] Cicero himself writes — "When we consider the continuous and fixed movements, the courses, together with the revolutions of the heavenly spheres which are so numerous and so gigantic, we must acknowledge that all these bodies are guided by a Superior Intellect. Since, therefore, neither the mind nor the power of man can produce such results, God alone must be the Architect of all these worlds and the Director of their movements. The beauty of the world, the harmony of the spheres, show at first sight that this is not the work of chance, and force us to acknowledge that there exists above us a Nature, superior, eternal, and worthy of the admiration of the human race."[2] Horace, one of the greatest among Rome's men of genius, thus eulogises the Divinity—"It is God, who, through the order of the seasons, makes harmony to reign over the sea, the land, and the whole universe. It is from Him that all beings have sprung, and not one can be compared to Him. Nothing living is equal to Him, nor worthy to rank immediately after Him."[3] Virgil and all the classical authors think and speak in the same manner.

This opinion of the ancients is of great weight; they speak the language of reason without obscurity. Living in the midst of paganism, seeing nothing but false religions around them, they might have been tempted to look upon the idea of God as a false notion. On the contrary, these great minds, free from all traditional influences, believed that there was a plan in the organisation of the world. They believed in the Divinity. This proof is certainly a very strong one, and their conclusion seems to have been foreseen and attained by the most vigorous exercise of the power of reason.

[1] "Dictionary"—*Final Causes.*
[2] "De natura deorum."
[3] "Qui mare et terras, variisque mundum
Temperat horis;
Unde nil majus generatur ipso;
Non viget quidquam simile aut secundum."
—Lib. I., Ode xi.

It is, then, from God that all those laws which rule the world flow; thus the stars trace their paths in the heavens, atoms form our bodies, and germs of vegetation work on silently in the fertile earth, animals come and go, increase and multiply. God is the Alpha and the Omega of the universe. All of us have seen one or more of those great exhibitions in which the genius of man shines forth; those crystal domes, those transparent walls of glass supported by cast-iron frames and girders. We have gazed on the ingenious inventions of science, on the elegant improvements in art; but what are they compared to the grand spectacle of nature? How far more vast and eloquent is the display of the Creation! God's palace has the heavens for its dome, myriads of stars for its lights, and for its decorations the varied masterpieces of nature. In the midst of this radiant architecture, of those immense galleries winding round the mountain sides, in the calm of the valleys, in the shades of the forests, in the depths of the sea and of the rivers, workmanship, defying admiration, exhibits its great masterpieces. Each production, from the infinitely small to the infinitely great, is a marvel. Reason stands confounded and is obliged to acknowledge the genius of the Divine Artist, an unique Workman, a Supreme Architect.[1]

Finally, "I feel within myself that there is a God," said La Bruyère, "and I do not feel His non-existence." The idea of God has been deeply engraved in the heart of man. "If God exist," wrote Voltaire, "it is not necessary to prove His existence by an algebraical demonstration." A religious fact is a universal fact, and history presents no other so constant as this one. Except some few hundred unbelievers, the whole civilised human race has adored, does adore, or is seeking after God. How can we explain this general movement of souls towards a God who permits so many wretched beings to exist? God is still the corner-stone of the human race. No legislator has dared to banish Him, no society has ever ignored Him. On earth, as in heaven, He is because He is. It would be superfluous to ask for proofs from

[1] One of the most convincing works written to prove that nature's laws do not exist of themselves, and are, consequently, from God, is that of M. Emile Boutroux, "De la contingence des lois de la nature."

Moses or the sacred writers; let us turn to the profane authors. When Herodotus treats of various nations he points out their religion, though he often makes it ascend to fabulous epochs; Hesiod, Homer, and the great poets sang of it later. Plato proves the existence of God by the unanimous consent of the Greeks and barbarians.[1] Aristotle affirms that "all men have an idea of God, and this notion has existed among them from the remotest antiquity."[2] "What nation," says Cicero, "or what race of men has not (even without any previous teaching), a certain anticipated knowledge of the gods, which Epicurus calls προλήψιν?"[3] Seneca, in turn, says—"There is no nation so rude as not to believe in the gods."[4] The belief in God may have been eclipsed among certain savage nations, but it always rises again from its ashes. The feasts of the gods have everywhere been the feasts of the people. Everywhere we have seen temples, altars, sacrifices, offerings, and hands raised to Heaven. Everywhere people have affirmed their belief in the Divine Intervention in the government of the world. They have had national gods, domestic gods, gods at births, gods at funerals, gods in war and in peace. Men, united as a national body, have always rendered public worship to the Divinity. "Rome," says Montesquieu, "was a vessel ever held by two anchors in a storm, viz., religion and morality." Rome, indeed, placed religion above all things. The seven sages of Greece had this favourite maxim, "Follow God." And when St. Paul, preaching of the Crucified to the Athenians, called them "the most religious of men," he only repeated the opinion of history. "The Turks," says Chateaubriand in his "Voyage en Orient," "paid attention to two things only—my religious practices and my weapons." Two centuries ago, when the United States proclaimed their new government, they made the worship of God the foundation-stone of the Constitution they were establishing, and of the edifice they were constructing. A religious fact being thus established, finds irrefragable reason for it in the human mind. A child

[1] "De legibus," x.
[2] "De mundo," v.
[3] "De natura deorum," Lib. I., Chap. xv.
[4] "Epistles," 117.

receives this idea like a graft, but it does not remain as a dead branch within his soul. He adapts and welds it to himself, and penetrates it with his own sap. When sudden joy presents itself, or an unexpected misfortune surprises a man, he feels at once his slumbering faith aroused, and this cry escapes him—

Mon Dieu ! dans ses rages infimes,
Dans ses tourments, dans ses repos,
Dans ses peurs, dans ses pantomimes,
L'âme vous hèle à tout propos !

Du plus profond de ses abîmes
Quand la souffrance, avec ses limes,
Corrode mon cœur et mes os,
Malgré moi, je crie à vos cimes :
Mon Dieu !

Aux coupables traînant leurs crimes,
Aux résignés pleurant leurs maux,
Arrivent toujours ces deux mots,
Soupir parlé de deuils intimes,
Vieux refrain de vieilles victimes :
Mon Dieu !

—M. Rollinat's "Névroses," Épilogue.

To pretend that this idea of God arises from fear, from ignorance, from the policy of clever princes, or from education, is to assign to a general and persistent fact causes which always change with times and places. A religious fact, on the contrary, has against it all bad passions, hostile as these are to religious faith; nationalities which divide the human race into a multitude of egotistical and rival peoples; time, which has left so many famous doctrines in oblivion; epochs, for the ideas of one century are opposed to those of another; finally, space, which hinders the diffusion of truth. If, in spite of all, a religious fact reproduces itself continually in history, it must be that it forms part of human nature. While our schools are discussing the question of the existence of God, our laws and our families are living on the answer. Savages, as well as civilised nations, have a religion, true or false, sublime or absurd. They have a worship. This is a colossal fact. There are some who despise this proof; let us not be of the number. Metaphysical proofs of God are everything to novices in philosophy, but the proof quoted above is, at the same time, worth all the rest; the more so since meta-

physics were only invented to justify religion. Certainly this fact ought to shake a man who has settled down into total negation; it ought to prevent his feeling absolute security if he is intelligent, and has not become thoroughly prejudiced in his mind. There is no argument more powerful against all materialist systems. Heine used to say that if Kant's criticism has shaken the classical proofs of the Existence of God, the very idea of God is so natural to man that he cannot help believing in it. "In the spider's web of Berlin dialectics, not even a fly could meet with Death, and how much less a God."[1]

We will conclude with Plato, when he said to a young man who denied the existence of the Divinity—"My son, thou art young, and the march of time will modify many of thy ideas on the most important questions; now you are dogmatising and denying the existence of the gods, but one day you will come to very different conclusions. Wait, then, before deciding this question; wait till you have attained wisdom."

V.

But there are facts which seem to contradict the existence of God, such as the presence of moral and physical evil, in this world. The problem of evil has troubled human reason for a long time. Why is there so much evil on the earth? Wherefore is there pestilence, famine, and war? "Shame to him who sees evil without being grieved thereby," said Brizeux. And Horace before him, *Nihil est ab omni parte beatum*—"Nothing is perfect in every point."[2] Musset has grasped this problem, and brought it out admirably in the following lines, entitled "Espoir en Dieu":—

O toi que nul n'a pu connaître
Et n'a renié sans mentir,
Réponds-moi, toi qui m'as fait naître
Et demain me feras mourir.

Pourquoi donc, ô Maître suprême,
As-tu créé le mal si grand,
Que la raison, la vertu même
S'épouvantent en le voyant;

[1] "Germany," 10th Part—"Confessions of a disciple of Hegel."
[2] "Odes," II., xliii. 27.

Lorsque tant de choses sur terre
Proclament ta divinité
Et semblent attester d'un père
L'amour, la force, la beauté?

Comment, sous ta sainte lumière,
Voit-on des actes si hideux
Qu'ils font expirer la prière
Sur les lèvres des malheureux?

Pourquoi, dans ton œuvre céleste,
Tant d'éléments si peu d'accord?
A quoi bon le crime, la peste,
O Dieu juste, pourquoi la mort?

Pourquoi laisser notre misère
Rêver et deviner un Dieu?
Le doute a désolé la terre;
Nous en voyons trop ou trop peu![1]

Musset, as we see, sets the problem forcibly before us. Evil exists in the world; we cannot shut our eyes to it; human nature is panting under its burthen of suffering. *Sunt lacrymæ rerum, et mentem mortalia tangunt*, says Virgil—"All things in nature weep, and our soul echoes the universal groan." St. Peter says—*Omnis creatura ingemiscit et parturit*—"All creation groaneth and travaileth." The greater part of the human race walk along their way with bleeding feet; the dust of the roadside mingles with their sweat, and is watered by their tears. Hearken to the voice of history; listen to the chorus of cries, sobs, and maledictions. Executioners and victims, rich and poor, free men railing against each other, slaves hewing marble for the palaces of their tyrants; serfs raking the soil to extract from it a little brown bread; workmen blasting granite rocks in the mountains, and making roads to the centres of public industry; miners passing half their lives in the bowels of the earth; victims of war and torture; little ones beaten or worked to death: women deceived and forsaken —there bursts forth from all these human breasts a cry of lamentation, telling out the sorrows of ten thousand years. It is, as the poet says, the voice of weeping men. No doubt

[1] The Viscountess de Janzé, in her "Études et récits sur A. de Musset," declares that he made his sacramental confession before dying, and she does so on the testimony of an aged and venerable priest, the Abbé de Mauléon, who declared that he had assisted the poet during his last illness.

the triumphal car of progress moves on, but its wheels are blood-stained. For the greater number, life is a long struggle with hunger, spent in profound ignorance and unrequitted toil. To many death comes as a release. Even for the most favoured, such as are called "the happy ones of this world," life is but a storm, brightened by a few gleams of light. Banished from one part of our soul, grief will find its way in again at another. "In the midst of pleasure and, as it were, from the very centre of flowers," as Lucretius says, "we perceive arising a certain mysterious bitterness which seizes us by the throat."[1] And, side by side with misfortunes are crimes, acts of baseness, outbursts of hatred. "I turned myself to other things. I saw the oppressions that are done under the sun and the tears of the innocent, and they had no comforter; and they were not able to resist their violence, being destitute of help from any."—Eccl. iv. 1. There is also the fever of sinful pleasures. What horrors may not be overshadowed by one night's darkness? Hearken to the universal wail which arises from men and things. "The only thing which can excuse God," says Bentham, "is His non-existence." "I have much changed since then," exclaims one of Shakespeare's characters. "Men are to the gods what flies are to children at play—they kill them to amuse themselves."[2]

It must be confessed that the problems of pain and sorrow are insoluble by pure philosophy. How can we reconcile physical pain with the notion of God, especially in those creatures whose pain is not sent as a probation? To say that physical suffering is nothing, is a simple negation of being, and is not to be taken seriously. The terrible sufferings to which we see organised beings subject are anything but negative. Nor ought we to be satisfied with saying, as Malebranche does, that original sin bears its consequences, and has its echoes throughout the whole of nature. Monsieur Janet answers—"It may be so, as far as concerns man, but have animals fed on forbidden hay?" As to moral evil, it will be objected that it is not God's doing but a consequence of man's liberty. Very true; but if God is just, and loves justice, how is it that He created

[1] Lucretius, Book IV., v. 1125, 1126.
[2] "Cymbeline."

the human race to be almost irresistibly drawn to evil? We Christians find it hard enough to do right; how must it be with savages? For (and this anomaly also has to be explained) there are races that seem to be completely abandoned and savage. To suggest, with Thiers,[1] that evil and pain are perhaps the necessary result of general laws, is no explanation. Let us admit that it is so, but then there can be no longer any question of an all-powerful God. If the laws established by God are above Him there is no longer any God. And this is precisely what the atheist and materialist say. Montaigne, with his exquisite common sense, has perfectly expressed this thought—"The ethics of philosophy teaches that man should rise above evil, but who among them does so practically? That would be a supernatural act; is there any one who really performs it? It can only be the fruit of Christian faith." D'Holbach used to say—"Look at physical pain, look at the moral suffering to which the world is a prey; after that how can you believe in God?" Voltaire answers, but very feebly as we think—"The idea of an avenging God who makes creatures in order to torment them is horrible and absurd. But if a truth is proved to you does the truth cease to exist because it drags alarming consequences after it? There is a necessary Being, the source of all beings. Is He to exist the less because we are sufferers, or because I am not able to explain why we suffer?"[2] Here Voltaire is not giving an answer. He does not seem to understand that so many causeless sufferings appear incompatible with the existence of a Being who is infinitely good and all-powerful. This is a problem the solution of which it is vain to seek. St. Augustine remained a Manichaean for thirty years, being kept back from faith by this difficulty; and, after being converted, he lost much time in trying to solve it. Guizot, alluding to the vain efforts of St. Augustine to explain the problem of evil, used to say that no one has shown better than he how hard it is to reconcile this difficulty with spiritualism, or, indeed, with any philosophy. All the explanations brought forward by reason on this point are insufficient; they may satisfy young students of

[1] "On Property."
[2] Voltaire, "Dialogues," vol. i., p. 159.

philosophy at seventeen, but a serious mind requires something more; nor can the problem be eluded. In the Middle Ages these suggestions, if brought forward, would not have been admitted, but in our days it is impossible to pass them over, and it is better to acknowledge their force in all sincerity. "Physical pain and moral pain are strange presents," said Leibnitz, "made to us by the Divine Omnipotence." And yet we must have no hesitation in holding for certain two incompatible truths, viz., the existence of evil and the supreme goodness of God. "Without fear of offending common sense, I admit two notions which exclude one another; in a word, I believe in impossibilities. In a different order of things I also believe in impossibilities by admitting mathematically, with the geometricians, that the smallest part of space can be infinitesimally divided, and at the same time, with the chemists, I am obliged to acknowledge the indivisibility of atoms." In the universality of things that surround us, the small number of existing creatures which we know, only because we have observed a few of their exterior manifestations, make no more real show in proportion to the rest than a bunch of seaweed in the ocean. The eye of our intellect grows dim when we search into the infinitely small, and we are seized with giddiness as soon as we endeavour to fathom the infinitely great. We live in time and in space without knowing what either time or space is. The notion of eternity and of the infinite, and all such necessary ideas, impress themselves on our mind, though they are beyond all scientific demonstration. There is not one of our organic functions which is not an impenetrable mystery to us. And thus it is also with the mystery of evil. We must go to Christianity to find a solution of that problem, nor do we find it completely solved even there. We hold the two ends of the chain. Christianity is a fact, and a proved fact, which, being once admitted, necessarily involves the submission we owe to the teaching of Jesus Christ. Now Jesus, Son of God, who is God Himself, has told us that His Father is good, perfect, and just. All is then explained, and it would be ridiculous to doubt a Being who is Eternal. This Christian fact once admitted, we must believe what the Church teaches. She explains to us

that moral evil arose through original sin. This Christian solution, which places at the very origin of history a terrible falling away of the moral creature, which teaches us that the Divine Poem of Creation was, so to speak, interpolated, is alone compatible, notwithstanding its mystery, with the notion of a God, Holy and Free. Moreover, suffering is a means; it cannot be an end. God, in making us suffer, crushes the pride of our intellect, softens the hardness of our hearts, and strengthens the weakness of our will by nourishing us with bitter food. Finally, if physical pain were an essential and absolute evil we could not understand God's having espoused it. The life of Christ was a life-long sacrifice, His death one of violent pain, and His religion was the religion of sorrows. Jesus taught us not only to bear but to cherish pain, and the radiance of His glorious light shone brightest through the crevices of His Sepulchre. This contains a very clear lesson for us. If we are convinced that Jesus Christ is not merely a man, we can then understand God's having permitted evil without derogation to His own attributes. After all, in any of our judgments, we may be the dupes of our own reason, whereas Christianity is a fact before which we must necessarily bow. The Christian religion offers holy compensation to us—*Beati qui lugent quia consolabuntur*—"Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." It tells us that this world is but a place of probation, or a prison. Can we be surprised at a prison being dark, its gaolers harsh, the food bad, and our bed small and narrow? The Christian suffers lovingly, accepting all from the hand that punishes him; for him the sufferings we would complain of are but passing trials on our pilgrimage towards the true Land of Canaan.

Another objection against the existence of God is this—If God exists, and wishes us to believe in Him, let Him manifest Himself. Whence comes it that He remains so silent and so hidden? M. Wallon, in his "History of the Revolutionary Tribunals," writes that the revolutionists, having made a great *auto-da-fé* of crosses and statues, said mockingly—"The thunderbolts of the alleged Deity have not fallen upon our heads!" Such is the argument which modern blasphemers oppose to the existence of God; it is

the stock objection of the positivists and scapegraces who feel restrained by the thought of God. "Show us your God," they say, and indeed they continually repeat that cry which David heard of old from the lips of the impious—*Ubi est Deus tuus*—"Where is thy God?" "Nobody has ever returned from the other world," says M. Littré; "experience has never shown us a man returned to life under the conditions we might expect." These difficulties are easily answered. A philosophical and religious certitude is essentially a moral certitude.[1] Argument is strong enough to convince me, but not to overwhelm me. I am not at liberty to believe that the window before me is not there, or that the whole is not greater than its part. Philosophical and religious certitude does not offer such evidence, which indeed it would be contradictory to claim, for the definition of religious and philosophical truths is that they are the rule of our moral being. Now, a moral being cannot be convinced without liberty. Our acts are free only inasmuch as our faith is free. A sensible evidence of God's existence would suppress the possibility of moral good. We should then be slaves. Who is there that, being as certain of seeing God as I am of seeing myself, would dare to offend Him, and expose himself to be damned? If you insist that our intellect is only to embrace faith in God when it sees Him in a visible manner, then we must close this discussion as useless. No one who expects this class of evidence will ever be able to make up his mind. It is absurd to exact "indisputable evidence" in order to believe, as Jules Simon at one time desired to have it; or "miracles attested by the Academy," or "a God who reveals Himself scientifically," as M. Rénan suggests; or "such proof as would render doubt impossible," as Schérer desires—in a word, belief independent of the will. This kind of argument not only tells against religion but against every kind of certainty, for where is there any existing truth which satisfies all the senses completely? The light of truth is not irresistible; it does not attract men as a lighthouse does birds during their nocturnal migrations. Such philosophers are too exacting and unreasonable. We may address them

[1] See "La certitude morale," by Ollé-Laprune.

thus—"You complain of not seeing God, but do you see sound, or smell, or reason? God is a spirit infinitely above your intelligence. By this intelligence you may see what is just and beautiful, and by it you may see God. Besides, faith in God is not a scientific conviction; it is a theological virtue."[1] If Pilate, Barabbas, and Judas had found the irresistible truth which you insist upon they would have obeyed it. This must teach you that you are seeking for truth in the wrong way.[2] Hearken to them; their reasoning, substantially, is the same as yours. "No one has ever seen God," say they, "and has any one ever come back from the tomb?" "Like you they conclude that faith in God is only fit for women and children. If you are right so are they. What! Is truth then to be reached by the sad road of vice, debauchery, cowardice, or treachery?"[3] Then there would be no longer any moral problems. "You complain," says Bossuet to the incredulous, "that God has not communicated His secret to you. To whom do you want God to reveal it? Is He to whisper to each one, or to show Himself to the whole world? And why to you more than to any one else? Choose the men you wish God to send to you to make you hear His voice. He has sent them. Where would you find any more capable or better suited to persuade you, and how can you suspect them of a plot? You make them say—'Let us conspire together and invent a beautiful fable; let us say the Crucified One is the Son of God.' But if that be true, as so many facts prove it to be, what obstinacy you exhibit in refusing to submit your judgment to authority."[4]

We can push this objection further. If God exists, why

[1] "Blessed are they who have not seen and yet have believed."

[2] "On my wedding tour I met, at a certain railway station, the Jesuit father whom I had consulted with a view to reception into the Church of Rome. . . . I was a little disappointed at his making no inquiries as to whether I had become a Roman Catholic, so I said to him, somewhat sharply, 'Well! are you going on a proselytising expedition?' 'No,' he answered, 'I am going on an astronomical expedition.' 'Indeed,' said I; 'perhaps you will be surprised to hear that I am more than ever convinced of the childish folly of the Roman Catholic religion.' . . . 'There are only two ways of seeking a religion,' replied he, as he got into his train. 'Which are——?' I inquired. 'The right way and the wrong way.' . . . 'And mine was——?' But, as the train moved down the platform, the Jesuit merely smiled and nodded pleasantly from his carriage window."—"Life of a Prig," p. 68.

[3] De Cossoles, "Le doute."

[4] "Pensées chrétiennes et morales."

is He denied by intelligent minds? Why is He adored chiefly by the simple, the unlearned, and the little ones? Why does He show Himself so seldom? This is the objection of the commonplace unbeliever. Never was this difficulty presented more forcibly than by Göethe, "the great pagan," as his contemporaries called him. It is Göethe who says, speaking by the mouth of Prometheus, at the end of the drama of this name—"I know of nothing under the sun more to be pitied than you, poor gods. You live on incense and offerings, and you would be reduced to die of hunger were it not for children and mendicants, poor fools, who console themselves with hope. When, as a child, I was in distress, I used to turn my straining eyes towards the sun, as if to discover in the regions beyond it an ear to hear my complaint, a heart like my own to compassionate the afflicted. Who came to my rescue against the pride of the Titans? Who saved me from the living death of slavery? Was it not thou, oh my heart; is it not thou who hast made all things? When young and good thou didst, in thy delusion, render fervent thanksgivings to the Universal Giver above. But, as to honouring Him! Why should I do so? Hast thou ever appeased the sorrows of the oppressed? Hast thou ever dried the tears of the afflicted? Who constructed a human heart in me? Is it not Time, the Omnipotent one, and Destiny, the eternal one, who are my masters and thine? Didst thou imagine, perhaps, that I ought to hate life, and fly to the desert, because all the flowers of my dreams have not borne fruit? Here I occupy myself with creating men to my own image, a race similar to myself, to suffer, to weep, to rejoice, and to disdain Thee as I do." There is no trace of antiquity in this extract but the name and the personage; it is thoroughly modern in tone and thought, and it condenses into a few words the most specious objections against God.

Göethe says—"Those who know God and love Him form the minority; the majority of men are indifferent." We grant this; but what does it matter to any sensible man? There are some who cannot resist the sophistry of numbers, and for whom numerical strength is of greater weight than logical proof. We prefer the old warning of the law of

Moses—"Thou shalt not follow the multitude to do evil, neither shalt thou yield in judgment to the opinion of the most part, to stray from the truth."—Ex. xxiii. 2.[1] To approve of evil and then to commit it is but logical; to follow error outwardly while inwardly disapproving of it, because we have not the courage to resist either the influence of bad example, or the tyranny of public opinion, or the threats of the wicked, would be both unreasonable and shameful. Besides, in truth, there is no question of siding with the greater number. "Children and the ignorant," says Göethe, "believe without difficulty, the contented and well informed believe with difficulty. There are highly-instructed and sincere persons who, after having examined, cannot believe. You will say—"This tells against God." We reply—"There are others no less intellectual nor less sincere who, notwithstanding, believe in God and Jesus Christ with all their hearts. This is more in our favour than your objection is against us. A man who is certain carries more authority with him than he who is uncertain. It requires a firm and enlightened mind to admit any truth whatsoever. It is not easy to disentangle a thread from that web which forms the groundwork of thought and human life. It is most surprising that there should be any dogmatisers among profound thinkers and clever men. In history, philosophy, and religion human reason has ever sailed on an ocean of opinions. Division of minds is the strongest objection we can raise against certitude. To hold firmly to a doctrine, it behoves us to have good reasons with which to confront its opponents. A Plato is stronger on the side of God than a Lucretius is against Him, though it is easier to be a sceptic than a believer." Göethe thinks that fate governs everything. But there are other men as sincere as Göethe and as cultivated, who declare that they have never prayed in vain, and who affirm they have received help from above. St. Paul was convinced that he had often

[1] It is the boast of the Indian, Chinese, and other Buddhistic Theosophists, that, "though there has not been any active missionary labour for a space of 1500 years, their adherents far outnumber the supporters of all Christian Churches collectively, for they amount to 450 millions—that is, a full third part of the whole of mankind . . . now that the European descendants of the Aryans have reached the age of maturity, and are able to comprehend the pure unadulterated truth of the Buddha, his doctrine will become the religion of the future."—"A Buddhist Catechism," p. 81.

been comforted by Jesus Christ during his apostolate. All the saints and all true Christians are persuaded that they receive from God strength and help in the struggle of life. Many prayers may be granted though the hands of God remain invisible, and this is the Christian's practical answer. The Providence of God must remain sufficiently obscure for faith to be untrammelled. It is evident that, if a providential act were always visible, we would believe in God by compulsion. All faith would be suppressed, and life would no longer be, as men and Christians have ever understood it, a trial of our free will. The God of the Bible, the God denied by Göethe, styles Himself, on the contrary, "a hidden God"—*Deus absconditus.* What are we, and who is He whom we cite to appear before our tribunal?

> What is He? Look above your heads!
> Behold the skies, the days, the nights!
> Now! What are you? Look down into your grate![1]

As to the lyrical blasphemy of Prometheus, which closes the quotation, it is opposed to the general feeling of humanity in all time. Everywhere under heaven throughout our planet men have recourse to God. Göethe acknowledges this universal instinct in these words—"When I was a child I turned my unsophisticated eyes towards the sun." The multitude believes in God's power, and in the efficaciousness of invoking it, and this human instinct is a strong evidence of God's existence, for such an instinct as the result of an universal illusion would be incomprehensible.

[1] Victor Hugo, "Legends of the Centuries," vol. iii., "All the past and all the future."

CHAPTER III.

THE TRUE GOD.

Ecce magnus Deus vincens scientiam nostram—"Behold God is great, exceeding our knowledge."—Job xxxvi. 26.

"Thy soul can occupy itself at the same time with what is taking place here, and in Egypt, and in Sicily; and shall not the mind of the Divinity be able to think of all things at once?"

—XENOPHON, "Remarkable sayings of Socrates," Book I., Chap. iv.

"There are always scorching winds which pass over and dry up the soul of man. Prayer is the dew which refreshes it."

"Paroles d'un croyant."—LAMENNAIS.

WHEN for the first time we recited intelligently the "Our Father,"[1] even without reflecting that this prayer had been taught us by God, we felt that the God to whom we spoke was indeed the God of whom our intellect and our heart had need; we felt that this was indeed the God made for us. This God of the "Our Father" is the only God who engages the understanding and the heart of those who have the happiness to believe in Him. To Him alone sacrifices are offered; He alone is both feared and loved; in His name alone do we control our passions.

I.

To know that God exists is but a small thing, if we know not who He is. What spiritualism[2] demonstrates and demands is a personal God.

[1] Matt. vi. 7-13.

[2] The word "spiritualism" wherever it is used by the author, signifies the supernatural, or belief in God the Supreme Spirit. With him a "spiritualist" is a believer in the supernatural, not necessarily a Christian, but necessarily a believer in God. He makes no sort of reference to spiritism, or spiritists, *i.e.*, the necromancy and necromancers (chiefly charlatans) of modern times. It seems advisable to repeat this explanation in order to prevent any possible misapprehension.

Can we know what God is? Can we find out His attributes? Some philosophers answer boldly and absolutely—"No! Every proposition applied to God is an impertinence, excepting this one, that He is!" The reason they give for their assertion is that our intelligence being relative and imperfect, can grasp only what is relative and imperfect. From the fact that we can conceive the divine perfections only after an imperfect manner, agnosticism concludes that we can know nothing at all about them. The conclusion outstretches the premises. Truly we know the divine perfections but imperfectly; we do not admit more than this. Our metaphysical principles enable us to determine what, within the range of our science, corresponds to the divine attributes, for the form in the effect is the realisation of the thought in the cause. When then we know the form, we know by analogy the causal thought. The forms or laws of the world are traces of the creative thought. The order of the world shows us God as a Disposer; the laws of our mind reveal Him to us as a Sovereign Thought. Our moral personality discovers in Him a moral autonomy. Thus we are enabled to say that in God there are conscience and personality.

From the idea which we have of God certain corollaries follow. God must be perfect, one, eternal, omniscient, all-powerful, free, just, and good.

God, once recognised as the cause of all beings, and of all the qualities of beings, must possess eminently in Himself all the perfections of all created beings, for the cause is always more perfect than its effect. He must, indeed, in the most absolute sense possess perfection, since perfection is but the completion of being. Now God being the Motor who moves without being moved, must be completely and altogether act itself. He cannot be *in potentia* in respect of a single point, for, were that possible, then in order to pass *de potentia in actum*, to acquire, that is to say, the actuality which was wanting to Him, He must needs be moved by some other. Therefore perfection of actuality belongs to the Divine Essence, since God is recognised as the Prime Mover. God is act pure and simple, but an actuality which is perfect and complete. He comprehends and exhausts in Himself all possible perfections.

From this follows the Unity of God. We cannot conceive God otherwise than as independent and one. One Prime Mover suffices to explain the world. If there were two, either they would have the same perfections, and so there would be confusion between them, or the one would possess perfections which the other did not, and then neither of the two would be truly perfect. They would be independent of each other, and therefore one would be limited by the other. Moreover, the existence of each one would be in jeopardy, seeing that a conflict might arise between them. Either God is one, or there is no God. "Listen," says Bossuet, "in the secret depths of thy being, where the truth speaks to thee, and thou shalt hear—'There is but one God.'"

God is eternal; He is infinite in duration. If he had had a beginning, He must have had a cause which made Him begin to be; such cause would have been superior to Him, and would have been the true God. If He were to have an end, He would not be perfect, for He would be liable to the loss of His perfection. Besides, the end of any being comes from an extrinsic principle of corruption, and involves imperfection. Now, how could the perfect become imperfect, and how could what is simple in itself admit of corruption or alteration? Thus God is immutable, the eternal act of His mind extends over all the past, and gives reality to the present.

God is perfect Knowledge, because, being the cause of all things, He knows the law according to which their essence is constituted, for this law emanates from His mind. God knows all things: those which are merely possible; those which actually exist, or have existed, or will exist; and those also which are conditional. God, in fact, being Infinite Intelligence, must know all that is in itself truth. But all things possible, actual, or conditional are in themselves true, because, given in their regard two contradictory propositions, one or the other must of necessity be true. God, then, knows them wholly.

God is also Omnipotence, for the cause of all movement and of all energy must possess the perfection of energy. This perfection of power and energy has in it nothing of passivity, like powers of a lower order, which are, on the

one hand, active, and on the other, passive: the perfect activity of God has no admixture of passivity. It is evident that God can only do what is possible, that is to say, what does not imply contradiction. His power is one both with His will and with His practical intelligence.

We readily admit that it does not necessarily follow from God's being Absolute and Infinite that He is therefore free, just, and good.

It would seem that there are but two reliable proofs of the freedom of God. It is clear enough that we poor creatures are not necessary beings; and we can conceive that the first human being was no more necessary than we are. There might well have been only plants and animals upon the earth. Clearly, then, He who made the first Man might have left him unmade. Again, we believe ourselves to be free; we feel ourselves to be irresistibly free. Can it be imagined that our liberty comes to us from a Being who Himself acts from necessity? This liberty, or rather this varied liberty, inexplicable by the determinism of the material universe, nevertheless forms part of that universe. If this varied liberty is a cause, the only one perhaps of which we know, it is neither primary, absolute, nor necessary; this it proclaims of itself, and we are bound to believe it. It must, then, seek out its proper cause, and this is not the Universe. Hence, it concludes that the universe, like itself, is an effect. The cause of the universe then, in the mind of a being conscious of its freedom, can only be freedom, or something more perfect still. If nature looks up to the Free Being as being His masterpiece, it is because it proceeds from that Free Being as its Author. If there were not a free God, there could not be a free man; for in that case, the world not having been created, would be eternal, and would contain its laws within itself. What would be true of the whole, would be true also of all its parts. Every being would then obey the laws of eternal nature. There would thus be an end of liberty. Therefore human liberty involves or implies the existence of a free God. This conclusion recalls to our mind that beautiful saying of Montesquieu—"What greater absurdity can there be than that of fate creating intelligent and free beings?" Montesquieu, who was not by profession a

philosopher, nevertheless understood the question, and what he says is very wise. It is for this reason that consistent atheists, such as Taine, refuse to admit liberty in man, so that they may not be obliged to admit it in God.

God must be just and good. Would He be God if He were not just, He who is the Author of liberty, and of moral responsibility? Would He be true to Himself if, after having planted the great principles of morality in the human breast, He did not act according to them by judging man in accordance with those sacred laws established by Him, and engraven with His own hand upon our hearts? God *must* be good. This can be proved from nature. He is the God who "has not left Himself without a witness, doing good from heaven, giving rains and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness" (Acts xiv. 16). It is He who fertilises the earth by the sunshine and the early dew; who swells the rivers, and dries them up; who feeds the birds, the wild beasts, and the monsters of the deep; who causes the earth to bring forth corn, oil, and wine, which make glad the heart of man. All this is a mark of goodness in Him who governs nature. But, if there is the *pro*, there is also the *contra* side, inasmuch as God permits famine, droughts, earthquakes, and calamities. Being able to do us good unvaryingly, He sometimes does us harm, and that with the same instruments. Water both bears us on its surface and engulfs us; fire both warms and consumes; the wind both refreshes and lays waste; the vegetable kingdom both feeds and poisons us. Everywhere there is the benefactor, everywhere there is also the enemy. It is difficult to see only proofs of goodness in all this. It would seem as if the machinery of the great universe were defective; so many are the imperfections that one might say "the work had not received its finishing touch."[1] Thus wind is necessary to aid the work of navigation, and to dissipate the noxious vapours exhaled by the earth; yet what catastrophes does it not cause in the shape of storms, hurricanes, and cyclones! The rains nourish plants and animals, but how often are they either too abundant or too scarce! What can be more useful than the passions of the soul—

[1] Hume, "Dialogues," p. 25.

ambition, vanity, love, anger? And yet how often do they exceed lawful bounds, and to what frightful social disturbances do they give rise! There is nothing so excellent and so profitable in the universe but that it may become hurtful, either by excess or by default.

II.

Such is God as reason conceives Him: let us now trace His portrait in the Bible. It is here that the attributes of the spiritualist's God are set forth with the greatest sublimity and energy. He is Béranger's "good people's God." He has nothing in common with those divinities, full of imperfections and vices, such as the world at one time adored. "Between thy gods and mine, mark the difference," says Voltaire in "Zaire." It is to "humanity's most beautiful book," as M. Rénan styles the Bible, that we must go for grand conceptions of God.

He is IMMATERIAL, and the forces of nature are but His ministers. This idea of God is clearly brought out in the III. Book of Kings, chapter xix. The Lord speaks to Elias; He is not in the wind that shakes the rocks, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire; He is in the "gentle air," in the "soft voice," which whispers to the reason of the Prophet when Elias covers his face with his mantle and remains silent and motionless. He is NECESSARY, ETERNAL, ONE, SIMPLE, IMMENSE, IMMUTABLE. "I am who am" (Ex. iii. 14); "I am the Lord, and I change not" (Mal. iii. 6). "The heavens shall perish, but Thou remainest; and all of them shall grow old like a garment, and as a vesture Thou shalt change them, and they shall be changed. But Thou art always the self same, and Thy years shall not fail" (Ps. ci. 26-28). God says to Moses—"I am who am." "Thus shalt thou say to the children of Israel, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me to you; this is my name for ever" (Ex. iii. 14, 15). "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord" (Deut. vi. 4). "Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, all the remnant of the house of Israel, who are carried by My bowels, are borne up by My womb, even to your old age, I am

the same, and to your grey hairs I will carry you; I have made you, and I will bear; I will carry you, and I will save. To whom have you likened Me, and made Me equal, and compared Me, and made Me like? You that contribute gold out of the bag, and weigh out silver in the scales, and hire a goldsmith to make a god; and they fall down and worship. They bear him on their shoulders, and carry him, and set him in his place; yea, when they shall cry also unto him he shall not hear, he shall not save them from tribulation. Remember the former age, for I am God, and there is no God beside, neither is there any like to Me who show from the beginning the things that shall be at last, and from ancient times the things that as yet are not done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and all My will shall be done" (Isa. xlvi. 3, 4). "I will not give My glory to another; hearken to me, O Jacob, and thou Israel whom I call; I am the first, and I am the last" (Isa. xlviii. 11, 12). "Be converted to Me, and you shall be saved, all ye ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other" (Isa. xlv. 22). "Babylon, assemble thy prophets; assemble thy gods. Let them come and tell us all things that are to come; tell us the former things, what they were; and we will set our heart upon them, and shall know the latter end of them, and tell us the things that are to come. Show the things that are to come hereafter, and we shall know that ye are gods. Do ye also good or evil, if you can, and let us speak and see together. Behold, you are of nothing, and your work of that which hath no being; he that hath chosen you is an abomination" (Isa. xli. 24).

He is a SPIRIT.—"The hour cometh when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem shall you adore. . . . God is a Spirit, and they that adore Him must adore Him in spirit and in truth" (John iv. 21-24).

He is IMMENSE.—"Whither shall I flee from Thy face? If I ascend into heaven, Thou art there; if I descend into hell, Thou art present. If I take my wings early and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there also shall Thy hand lead me and Thy right hand shall hold me" (Ps. cxxxviii. 7-10).

He is IMMUTABLE.—"Thou art always the self-same"

(Ps. ci. 28). "I am the Lord, and I change not" (Mal. iii. 6). He is the "Father of lights, with whom there is no change nor shadow of alteration" (James i. 17). "God is not as a man that He should lie, nor as the son of man that He should be changed" (Num. xxiii. 19). He is the ALMIGHTY CREATOR, the ORGANISER, and the SOVEREIGN-MASTER of all things. "Our God is in heaven. He hath done all things whatsoever He would" (Ps. cxiii. 11). He says—"Be light made, and light was made." "Let there be a firmament," and there was one! "Let the waters be gathered together into one place," and they were gathered together. "Let there be lights made in the firmament of heaven," and two great lights were made. Let animals be brought forth in the waters and on the land, and it was so done (Gen. i. 3, etc.). "I made the earth, and I created man upon it. My hand stretched forth the heavens, and I have commanded all their host" (Isa. xlv. 12). "He spoke, and they were made; He commanded, and they were created" (Ps. xxxii. 9). "There is no one that can resist Thy voice" (Judith xvi. 17). "By His magnificence the clouds run hither and thither." "Canst Thou send lightnings, and will they go, and will they return, and say to Thee: Here we are?" (Deut. xxxiii. 26 and Job xxxviii. 35). "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and weighed the heavens with His palm? Who hath poised with three fingers the bulk of the earth, and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance?" (Isa. xl. 12). "All nations are before Him, as if they had no being at all, and are counted to Him as nothing" (Isa. xl. 17). "Which in His times He shall show, who is the Blessed and only Mighty, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, who only hath immortality, and inhabiteth light inaccessible. Whom no man hath seen, nor can see, to whom be honour and empire everlasting" (1 Tim. vi. 15, 16). "O Lord, Thou art our Father, and we are clay; and Thou art our Maker, and we are all the works of Thy hands" (Isa. lxiv. 8). "He looseth the belt of kings, and girdeth their loins with a cord" (Job xii. 18). "He stretched out the north, over the empty space, and hangeth the earth upon nothing. He measured the earth, and stretched the line upon it. He set bounds about the sea.

He gave a course to violent showers, and a way for noisy thunder. He showed the dawning of the day its place. He provideth food for the raven when her young ones cry. He made a cloud to be the garment of the sea, and wrapped it in a mist, as in swaddling bands" (Job xxxviii., etc.). "He hath set a time for darkness, and the end of all things he considereth" (Job xxviii. 3). "His eyes are far brighter than the sun" (Eccl. xxiii. 28). "No creature is invisible in His sight, but all things are naked and open to His eyes" (Heb. iv. 13). "O Eternal God, who knowest hidden things," says Susanna, "who knowest all things before they come to pass. Thou knowest that they have borne false witness against me" (Dan. xiii. 43). "I will ask thee," says the Lord to Job, "answer thou Me. Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell me if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? Or who hath stretched the line upon it? Where wast thou when the morning stars praised me together?" (Job xxxviii. 3-7). "Who can search out His ways? or who can say to Him, Thou hast wrought iniquity?" (Job xxxvi. 23).

He is the God of CONSCIENCE, and His eyes are too pure to behold iniquity. "The sinner rises from his bed in the night, despising his own soul, and saying, Who seeth me? Darkness compasseth me about, and the walls cover me, whom do I fear? and he knoweth not that the eyes of the Lord are far brighter than the sun, beholding round about all the ways of men, and the bottom of the deep, and looking into the hearts of men, into the hidden parts" (Eccl. xxiii. 25-28). He is just; He is terrible. "Because you have disobeyed Me, therefore will I punish you unto the third and fourth generation." "I will laugh and rejoice at the death of the wicked." "The wickedness of sinners shall be brought to nought, and Thou shall direct the just; the searcher of hearts and reins is the Lord" (Ps. vii. 10). "Why criest thou for thy affliction? Thy bruise is incurable; thy wound is very grievous, and thou hast no healing medicine . . . for I have wounded thee with the wound of an enemy, with a cruel chastisement, by reason of the multitude of thy iniquities thy sins are hardened" (Jer. xxx. 12). "Whom hast thou reproached, and whom

hast thou blasphemed? Against whom hast thou lifted up thy voice, and lifted up thy eyes on high? . . . I will put a ring in thy nose, and a bit between thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest" (4 Kings xix. 22-28). But He is not less slow to anger, and He abundantly pardons, remembering that we are but dust. "Return, O rebellious Israel, and I will not turn away my face from you, for I am holy, saith the Lord, and I will not be angry for ever. But yet acknowledge thy iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God; and thou hast scattered thy ways to strangers under every green tree. Return, O revolting children, return" (Jer. iii. 12-14). "Is it My will that a sinner should die, and not that he should be converted from his ways and live? Be converted, and do penance for all your iniquities, and iniquity shall not be your ruin. . . . Make to yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. And why will you die, O house of Israel? For I desire not the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God, return ye and live" (Ezech. xviii. 23-31). "Let us plead together; tell me if thou hast anything to justify thyself" (Isa. xliii. 26). "O Israel, forget me not; I have blotted out thy iniquities as a cloud, and thy sins as a mist" (Isa. xliv. 21-22). "As a father hath compassion on his children, so hath the Lord compassion on them that fear Him; for He knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are dust; man's days are as grass, as the flower of the field, so shall he flourish. For the spirit shall pass in him, and he shall not be. And he shall know his place no more" (Ps. cii. 13-16). "Either forgive them this trespass, or if Thou do not, strike me out of the book that Thou hast written" (Ex. xxxii. 31, 32). He talks with Adam in Paradise. He discusses with Abraham the conditions of pardon for the people of Sodom. When Noah and his family entered the Ark, God Himself shut the door.

God is also PROVIDENCE, the "Father who is in heaven." "Can a woman forget her infant, so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? and if she should forget, yet will I not forget thee" (Isa. xlix. 15). "The Lord thy God hath carried thee as a man is wont to carry his little son" (Deut. l. 31). "As the eagle, enticing her young to fly, and hovering over them, the Lord hath taken him and hath

kept him as the apple of His eye" (Deut. xxxii. 10, 11). "As one whom the mother caresseth, so will I comfort you" (Isa. lxvi. 13). "Thou hast visited the earth and hast plentifully watered it. The beautiful places of the hills shall grow fat, and the hills shall be girded about with joy. The vales shall abound with corn; they shall shout, yea, they shall sing a hymn" (Ps. lxiv. 10-14). "Thou lovest all things, O Lord. Thou hatest nothing that Thou hast made. Thou openest Thy hand, and fillest with blessing every living creature" (Ps. cxliv. 16). "The Lord covereth the heaven with clouds, and prepareth rain for the earth. He maketh grass to grow upon the mountains. He giveth to beasts their food, and to the young ravens that call upon Him" (Ps. cxlvi. 8). He is perfect holiness, nay, holiness itself. He often calls Himself the "Holy One of Israel" (Isa. xii. 6). "The Holy One came down from heaven." "I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and elevated, and His train filled the temple. Upon it stood the Seraphim; the one had six wings and the other had six wings; with two they covered His face, and with two they covered His feet, and with two they flew. And they cried one to another, and said—Holy, Holy, Holy, the Lord God of Hosts; all the earth is full of His glory. And the lintels of the doors were moved at the voice of Him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke" (Isa. vi. 1). "Holy Father," "just Father," said Jesus in His last prayer (St. John xvii. 11-25). Jesus Himself is known by the titles "holy" and "just." "The HOLY that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke i. 35). The devils use the same language as the Angel. "I know that Thou art the Holy One of God" (Mark i. 24). "But you denied the Holy One and the Just" (Acts iii. 14). "O Thou who art," exclaims Victor Hugo in "Les Miserables." "Ecclesiastes names Thee ALL POWER; the Maccabees name Thee CREATOR; the Epistle to the Ephesians names Thee LIBERTY; Baruch names Thee IMMENSITY; the Psalms name Thee WISDOM and TRUTH; John names Thee LIGHT; the Kings name Thee LORD; Exodus names Thee PROVIDENCE; Leviticus, SANCTITY; Esdras, JUSTICE. All Creation calls Thee GOD; Man calls Thee MERCY, and this is the most beautiful of all Thy names."

Such is the God of the Bible, the God whom man understands; and this is why the physico-teleological proof has a power of demonstration, sympathetic and popular, before which even Hume and Kant bow down with respect. The God of the metaphysicians is too far off, too unlike ourselves, to speak to our souls. Of what avail to creatures who suffer and must die is the ETHER of Zeus; the WATERY PRINCIPLE of Thales; the GREAT ALL of Pythagoras; the BEAUTY of Plato; the PURE THOUGHT of Aristotle; the UNIVERSAL REASON of Cicero; the JUPITER of Homer; the UNITY of the Alexandrines; the SILENT ABYSS of the Gnostics; the IMPERSONAL SUBSTANCE of Spinoza; the CONTRADICTORY IDEA of Hegel; or the UNINTELLIGIBLE UNKNOWABLE of Spencer? The God of finality is a God infinitely powerful, yet human and active. He is in every way beyond us. We cannot bend Him to the caprices of our imagination, nor bring Him within the limits of our reason. A high and impenetrable mystery conceals His absolute personality. But He is a living and a feeling God. He has not remained shut up within His majesty; He has shown Himself forth in His works; He has made Himself the bond and the soul of His creation. We feel ourselves constantly in the full sight of His ever-watchful eye, and under the pressure of His ever out-stretched hand. He has rights over us. He claims the homage of our prayers. We understand His demands. He hears our cry of suffering, and listens to our thanksgiving. His tender care to-day is a pledge of His bounty to-morrow. He will not plunge us wholly stricken with grief into eternal nothingness.

Understand, O philosophers, that this God is the TRUE God—the God of our reason and the God of our heart. We cannot comprehend your vague and actionless God, confused as He is with the idea of the good, the true, the right. We cannot comprehend this God whom you make a necessity to be conceded, an appendix of morality, a sort of honorary president in the world of phenomenal consciences. God, if He exists, must possess consciousness of His existence, of His power, and of His acts. We are anthropomorphists, you say, because we make God like ourselves. But if God has not the attributes we claim for Him, He is necessarily without intelligence, without good-

ness, without liberty, without personality. These sophisms have already been disposed of long ago by Socrates and by Aristotle. God must of necessity have some mode of existence. In the deistic plan the Infinite would subsist in a manner inferior to ourselves. He would have no knowledge of Himself, whilst we should know Him in a certain degree. To imagine a God after this sort is to deny Him altogether. In order to escape this difficulty the Hegelian criticism has taken refuge in the identity of contradictories. It affirms that God is both personal and impersonal, in the same way that Yes and No are equally true. Such an assertion is not worth discussing. No one has a right to make an equation between zero and unity. God exists in Himself, by Himself, and never began to be. Perfection is the only reasonable idea of the Divine substance. God is not an abstraction, but a perfect reality, a living personality, and the most positive of substances. He is the God who cannot be analysed, who is above the laws which He has established. Otherwise God would be but "a necessary dialectic instrument," as Proudhon says; or a "Mechanic hidden up in the skies," as Schèrer describes Him. We cannot conceive a God "enslaved to eternal matter," like the God of Saisset, or who is powerless, "constrained by the general laws of the universe," like the God of Jules Simon.[1] Such a God would be like the "Fate" which held Jupiter and the rest of the gods in bondage. Jupiter was the most powerful of the gods, but Fate was superior to him. "What would you have?" says Jupiter to a complaining mortal, "I could not deliver you from these evils."[2]

III.

Reason, then, and the instinct of humanity tell us that, if there is a God, He must be a "God who is Providence," occupying Himself with human affairs, and holding the thread of them in His hand. There is nothing more strictly logical than the life of man. It is a rigorous syllogism. In fact, it cannot be admitted that God should

[1] Of Jules Simon before he became a Catholic.
[2] Seneca, "De providentia."

not occupy Himself with His creatures. "How I despise those philosophers," says Bossuet, "who, admitting God to be the Author of universal order, think it beneath Him to occupy Himself with us, His creatures."[1] The Christian faith affirms the existence of Providence. The Christian faith once proved, Providence is *ipso facto* proved, and with equal force of demonstration. From the point of view of pure reason, Providence is a necessary corollary to the idea of God. Would He be just if He had given no sanction to the moral law of which He was the Author? Would He be wise if He had abandoned the world to the chances of blind caprice? Imagine, on a great lake, a boat containing several passengers. They did not embark rashly; they took a pilot. Suddenly a storm arises, water fills the boat, the passengers are wild with fright. Death stares them in the face: *Intentant omnia mortem*, as Virgil says. If the pilot neither knows how to make head against the fury of the waves, nor is able to do so, of what use is he? Is he not rather in the way? Would he not be better out of the boat? Now the God of the deist is in exactly the same position as this pilot. Everything goes on without him. Good and evil alike necessarily follow and obey general laws. Of what use is such a God as this? Atheism is a hundred times more reasonable than an Infinite and Almighty God who cannot, or will not, concern Himself with His work in detail. The instinct of humanity cries out for a God who is Providence. The Egyptians represented God under the image of an eye ever open, in order to remind men that He keeps constant watch and never sleeps. An Arabian proverb says—"In the black night God sees the black ant on black marble." All races have made use of prayer, and prayer pre-supposes Providence. Epicurus objected that it would be too arduous a task for the Divinity to enter into detail in our regard. This same Epicurus, who denied God and Providence, was surprised one day in prayer before the statue of Jupiter. "Never," exclaimed he who saw him there, "did Jupiter appear so great in my eyes as now that I have found Epicurus compelled thus to honour him." "Our desire is that God should exist," cries

[1] Bossuet preached all his life on the dogma of Providence; it was one of his dominant thoughts.

out Kant with energy. "Yes, we wish it, and we desire also that He may be Providence, in order to give sense and direction to our transient life upon earth."

"Prayer is incompatible with the idea of God," say our modern deists. "God does not act otherwise than by general laws. If He did, He would be compelled to be forever working miracles. Now miracles, which are derogations from the laws of nature, we never see. Therefore, God has judged it wiser to let general laws act and never to interfere with them. Besides, except in the case of the miracles of Mosaic and Christian history, we do not see that God has occupied Himself much with individuals. It is not usual to find that prayer, offered even with lively faith, attracts the attention of God, at least not noticeably." Most deists go further still: they deny to God the POWER of working miracles. "He cannot work miracles," they say, "without going contrary to His wisdom and His immutability." "Prayer itself is a miracle," says Jules Simon; "I admit it, but not as the prayer of petition, but as an aspiration after good. In any other sense prayer is folly. To pray is to ask God to derogate from the general laws He has established, and to occupy Himself with details."

The answer to these objections is simple.[1] "How do you know," we may say to the deists, "that God acts only according to general laws? One would suppose you knew both all that God *can* do and all that He *will* do. This is pure supposition. *Quod gratis asseritur, gratis negatur.* You always imagine the divine power concerned about the difficulty you have in understanding, eager to forestall your objections, like the common conjuror, who never performs without first inviting the spectators to assure themselves that there is no trick, that all is fair play. Moreover, that the law of nature is a manifestation of the will of God is certain; but that this will should have exhausted itself in that law so as to will nothing else, that is most unlikely. The artist never loses his whole individuality in his work. And the Artist who has constructed this great machine of the world is not

[1] The most decisive answer to Jules Simon the deist is Jules Simon the Christian!

likely to have abandoned it entirely to itself without reserving to Himself the means of using it in the education of the free beings for whose benefit He made it. Nature should most certainly have a settled order, and this by reason of her very destiny, namely, the service of man. If we could not rely on the regular recurrence of seasons, how should we devote ourselves to the cultivation of the earth? Man bases the formation of his plans on the regularity of the laws which govern the world. But, on the other hand, man is constituted a moral being, capable of attaining to good. As free, he may turn away from his true end. May not God, in order to recall him to the attainment of his end, make use of nature, that great instrument of development and education which He has placed between Himself and His creature? Do you say, 'God cannot'? Or that 'the enlightenment of the nineteenth century forbids us to believe in miracles'? The laws of nature are well known. But do you know that nature and the existence of matter present to every reflecting mind a problem at once unsolved and insoluble? And shall man, who is obliged to confess his ignorance as to the essence of matter, pose as a teacher where all is obscurity to him? There, in the regions where we know absolutely nothing, shall we presume to cry out that anything is 'impossible, impossible even to God Himself'"?

Scientists have their own articles of faith, and they would do well to dispose of them before they ridicule the dogmas of theology. "We must not," says Professor Huxley, whose evidence is worth as much as that of any other savant, "we must not attach more importance to the order and the laws of nature than to generalisations made by means of experience as to the past, and expectation, founded on that experience, as to the future. Certainly I do not intend to question the regularity and the order of nature, but it is not upon any considerations made *a priori* that we can establish scientific objections to the efficacy of prayer."[1] As for ourselves, we know only too well that the theory which refers back the Action of God to a time absolutely past, will very soon discover the divine interference to be superfluous, altogether deny creation,

[1] "Science and the Bishops," *The Nineteenth Century*, 1887.

and affirm the eternity of the world; that is to say, will absolutely deny the existence of God. The logic which connects these two propositions is so rigid that reason must yield to it sooner or later. The last consequence of these limitations is the denial of human liberty and human responsibility. Shall God and the world be in servitude to necessity and man be free? This cannot be! God is not a Workman who is continually setting to His work afresh. Do we not every day see what we call accidents about to happen, but which do not happen? What prevents them? Chance? There is no such thing as chance in nature. There is a law; there are a thousand laws. All these act in harmony. When we believe in God we have no right to prescribe limits to His power and to say—"Thus far shalt thou go and no farther." Besides, there does not appear to be less wisdom in granting a prayer which has been known from all eternity than in acting invisibly, yet directly, in order to grant it. Why should not God have arranged things from all eternity so that prayer should be answered without any apparent derogation from ordinary laws? It is precisely the mechanical theory of the universe which supplies the scientific explanation of the action of Providence. We do not pray in order to change the divine plan. "When a faithful soul," says Euler in a well-known passage, "addresses a worthy prayer to God, we must not imagine that that prayer is now known to God for the first time. No! From all eternity He has heard it, and He has ordered events in view of it, so that the fulfilment of that prayer might fall in with the natural course of events! In granting our prayers, God has foreseen everything, willed everything, and He changes nothing. He does not fall as we do under the influence of time. He does not modify His resolutions, but He carries them out." "God," says St. Augustine, "has reserved to Himself a certain number of miraculous events to be realised in their time beyond the ordinary course of nature, in order that at the sight of these wonders, not greater than many things which occur daily but are more unusual, those whom custom renders indifferent may be struck with astonishment. To govern the world is indeed a greater miracle than to feed five thousand men with five loaves. The former, however, no

one thinks anything of, but the latter every one admires, not because it is greater, but because it is more rare."[1]

"But the heavens seem like brass to our prayers," exclaim those who deny miracles. True; Christians have against them the apparent silence of God, but they have on their side the reason of this. It seems sometimes that God does not answer; and what says the blasphemer?

> Pourtant je veux prier; je suis trop solitaire;
> Voici que j'ai posé mes deux genoux à terre.
> Je vous attends, Seigneur; Seigneur, êtes-vous là?
> J'ai beau joindre les mains et, le front sur la Bible,
> Relire le *Credo*, que ma bouche épela,
> Je ne sens rien du tout devant moi. C'est horrible![2]

To these complaints of God's "silence," we may oppose the conviction of very many sincere men and women, that their prayers have been heard. We must consider the human soul as it has existed in some individuals, in order to convince ourselves that God has acted in a very special manner for those special souls. Besides, the multiplied theses of those who reject the miraculous all help to show the embarrassment of their authors. "Miracles are idle, useless, impossible; unworthy of God." If it were so easy to prove that there never have been, and never can be, miracles; that man has never obtained, by prayer, any derogation from the laws of nature, unbelievers would not present us with all their hypotheses and vague theories, which cannot be verified. Yet further, deists, in maintaining that it is impossible to establish, logically, the efficacy of prayer and sacrifice, prove that tradition attests their existence, and that belief in them is built upon a stronger foundation than mere human conception. The more they try to prove that the principle of these dogmas is not to be found, either within the sphere of experience or in that of logic, the clearer it becomes that they would not have been believed with an indestructible faith as old as the human race, had they been false. If worship, which gives expression to these old beliefs, is the purest fiction, and if the

[1] "Tract. in Joan.," 24.

[2] Sully-Prudhomme, Œuvres, t. i., "La prière." This objection is made against Christianity by a sincere soul wishing, but not able, to believe. However, it is answerable, and the fact on which it rests can be explained without its being necessary to deny either the evident sincerity of Sully-Prudhomme or the truth of Christianity.

beliefs themselves are chimerical, how will those who deny faith in the supernatural set about proving, to a consequent mind, that it ought to believe in God at all? Besides, Christianity teaches that God always answers prayer, but in such a way that our faith may always be put to the test, and as He judges most favourable to our salvation. The things which we desire are often those which would be hurtful to us, and what we look upon as an evil, forms part of the plan which is to bring about our greatest good; so that, even if God does not give us the exact thing we ask for, He, nevertheless, still answers our prayers. "Man," says de Maistre, "ought to pray as if he could do everything, and resign himself as if he could do nothing." Certainly in order to admit this, in spite of God's silence, we must be certain that the Christian religion is divine.

The Providence of Christians, then, is very different from the Providence of philosophers. The latter teaches that God watches over His work as a whole, that He preserves the species, and safeguards general results, but that He does not interfere in details. The God of Christians, on the contrary, is concerned with the minutest details of His creation. "Behold the birds of the air," says Jesus, "they neither sow nor do they reap nor gather into barns: and your heavenly Father feedeth them." "Consider the lilies of the field how they grow; they labour not, neither do they spin. But I say to you, that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these" (Matt. vi. 26-29). But man is above all the especial object of God's tenderness. It is he whom His Maker exhorts to "cast all his care upon Him" (1 Peter v. 7). He teaches him to say "Our Father," and to ask of Him his daily bread. Our heart is touched when we hear Jesus exclaiming—"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you" (Luke xi. 9). "The very hairs of your head are numbered" (Matt. x. 30). "What man is there among you, of whom, if his son shall ask bread, will he reach him a stone? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?" (Matt. vii. 9-11). "Behold the birds of the air,

your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are you not of much more value than they? Be not solicitous, therefore, saying, What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the pagans seek. For your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things" (Matt. vi. 26, 31, 32). The prayer of petition supposes that God is all-powerful—that He can do all that nature cannot do. Thus, God is greatly magnified by the Christian idea of Him.

It is equally ill-judged to say with Rousseau—"I do not pray to God, He knows better than I do what I want." On the contrary, if there is a God, it is most just that He should require prayer from us, as an act of dependence. If He exists—and the deists grant this—and if He regards us His creatures as His children, why should He not will that before He comes to our assistance we should tell Him our needs? That a God, hidden away behind His own laws, who has not, and cannot have, any communion with His creatures—that such a God should neither ask nor receive adoration we can understand. That a God who is at the same time everything and yet nothing, who is not a true being, who has not a heart, who does not exact adoration, which, after all, we could not give Him, since it would be, in some sort, to adore ourselves—this, too, we can understand. But a living God, a God who fills all things with His Majesty and His power, to whom all hearts are open, who inclines Himself towards us with a solicitude infinitely greater than that of a mother for her new-born child—would such a God be the God of our conscience if He did not demand our prayers? Should we have any respect for Him? The modern anti-theistic theory is the most inadmissible, the most crushing of all mysteries. If there is no living God, if creatures are produced by blind evolution, if the initial cell is capable of producing all that we see—organic beings, with mutual relations, laws, and a necessary equilibrium—then, indeed, is miracle overthrown. But if God is what we believe Him to be, prayer ascends naturally from the soul. The more noble and finely strung the heart, the more spontaneous the prayer. Undoubtedly God knows our necessities better than we do. But if He wills that man should unite himself to Him by prayer, that

he should thus acknowledge his need of his Creator, can we refuse to God His undoubted right? If God were to do everything for man, and man to do nothing for God, then, logically, it were useless for God to have created man. He should have placed him in heaven at once.

Strauss writes thus—"When, in a Catholic land, a drought threatens the harvest, the peasants expect from their curè a procession over the country, to call down rain from heaven. In beholding this, one cannot help crying out, '*O sancta simplicitas!*—O holy stupidity.'"[1] And elsewhere he says—"Prayer has no more influence on events than the motion of the fingers has on the phases of the moon."[2] This dull irony and haughty contempt will tell but little against the simple and universal philosophy of faith and prayer, which proclaims the reality of a God who is the Father of mankind. Prayer is an absolute necessity to man. Listen to Lamennais—"When you have prayed, do you not feel your heart lighter, and your soul more at rest? Prayer renders affliction less painful, and joy more pure; it imparts to the one an element of strength and sweetness, and to the other a heavenly fragrance. What are you doing upon earth? and have you nothing to ask of Him who placed you there? You are a traveller in search of his native land. Walk not with your head bowed down, lift up your eyes that you may see your way. Heaven is your fatherland; and when you look up to heaven is there no stir within you? Do you feel no heart's yearning? or is the yearning mute? There are some who say—'What is the use of praying, God is too far above us to listen to such miserable creatures as we are.' Who, then, made these miserable creatures? Who gave them feeling, thought, speech? Was it not God? And, if He has been so generous towards them, was it that He might afterwards forsake them, and drive them from Him? In very truth we tell you, whosoever says in his heart that God despises the works of His hand, blasphemes God. Others again say—'What is the use of praying to God? Does He not know our necessities?' God knows what we want

[1] "Ancienne et nouvelle foi."

[2] *Ibid.* Thus Strauss "jests with Attic grace." And again, but it should be read in the text, Voltaire was right when he said—"Teutons, je vous souhaite un peu plus d'esprit et un peu moins de consonnes."

better than we do, and that is why He wills that we should ask; for God Himself is our chief want, and to pray to Him is to begin to possess Him. The father knows what his son needs, but must his son, therefore, not ask him for anything, and not thank him for anything? When animals suffer, when they are afraid, when they are hungry, they utter plaintive cries: these cries are their prayers to God, and God hears their prayers. Shall man be the only creature whose voice shall not reach the ear of his Creator? Sometimes a withering wind sweeps over the land, and dries up the plants, then the withered stems stoop towards the earth, but moistened again by the dew, they revive, and lift up their languid heads. 'There are always scorching winds passing over the soul of man, and withering it up. Prayer is the dew which revives it.'"[1] Even Atheists pray; even Prometheus, defying Jupiter; even the disciple of Holbach, and of La Mettrie, who takes out his watch, and gives the Supreme Being a quarter of an hour to strike him dead.[2] Proudhon, who says—"God is folly and cowardice; God is hypocrisy and lying; God is tyranny and misery; God is evil." Henri Heine, who on his deathbed still dares to rail at "the great Aristophanes of Heaven." All these pray, for they all attest the contradiction that is within them; the sufferings of this state of trial, their presentiment of an approaching deliverance; all refer their contradictions, their sufferings, their presentiments to Him who could, if He would, have made them senseless and impeccable, but who chose to make them men, that is to say, to make them free beings, preyed upon by a merciless weariness, but responsible and capable of justice. What makes mankind, whether civilised or not, religious is the hope in, or fear of, some one. Humanity only clings to God because it believes that God is, in some way, useful in the present life. The theory of M. Jules Simon would meet with little success among our country-people. It is well known that they never pray so fervently as when their crops are in question. They would mock at the indifferent and inactive God of the

[1] "Paroles d'un croyant."

[2] This was one of the non-original pranks of the late Charles Bradlaugh, "Atheist and Republican," when lecturing on atheism. As if it belonged to the creature to appoint the time or the manner of his own death, or to dictate to the Creator as to His conduct!

deists. He would seem to them like a liveried coachman, sitting on the box with his arms crossed, and letting his horses go where they please; or like a watchmaker, who, having made a watch, should say to the wheels—"Go on as you can, I have given you rules, follow them. I shall trouble myself no more about you." Deists would tell our peasantry that God was wise in acting thus; but this would only make God appear more strange to them. They would say—"Why does not your God come to the assistance of a poor suffering creature, especially when He sees him weak and helpless?" To their common sense this would never appear wisdom, but cruelty and want of power, and this instinctive reasoning of theirs is right.

We may press the difficulty, and say that the absence of revelation, as deists maintain, would argue very strongly against God. Can any one conceive a God who has never concerned Himself about His creatures? We thirst after God, and can it be that He has not told us one word about Himself? This would seem an absolute impossibility. If it were true that there had never been a revelation the proofs of the existence of God would be but slight. This is why many superior minds, outside Christianity, will not believe in the God of philosophy. What is the meaning of that heavenly Mechanic contemplating afar off the good or bad working of His machine; indifferent to the insulting triumphs of those whom the wheel lifts up, or the groans of those whom it crushes beneath it; a God, deaf and inaccessible? "One asks what those philosophers are about, who, if they do not make the Author of all creation a cruel tyrant, suppose Him to be, at any rate, a satrap playing with the world, a choragus amused at the wild dance of humanity."[1] The God of the deists has human reason against Him, and, moreover, He is a useless God. Since He has never put Himself out of the way for us in the past, He will not disturb Himself about us now. There is no reason either to fear Him or to pray to Him. For our present life, even for our moral life, He is of no service to us whatever. He will never send help to any one, or grace, as we Christians call it. According to

[1] "La vertu morale et sociale du christianisme," by le Comte Guy de Brémond d'Ars, p. 110.

deists we are influenced for good only by the general laws of civilisation or by education. Neither will their God be of much utility as regards the future life. Since God affords us no assistance here on earth, our virtues and vices depend much more upon circumstances than upon any efforts of our own. Is our father a wicked man? Led away by his example we are wicked like him. How can God blame us for not having known Him better here? Can we not answer Him that He has never given us any sort of assistance? This Supreme Being, separated from us by nature, as by a wall; impenetrable, not only to us, but to Himself; this Almighty One, who cannot reach out a hand to us through the thick partition of the universe, such is not the God that our heart's instinct demands. The saying of the deists of the eighteenth century—"Elargissez Dieu," and that of Victor Hugo—"Echeniller Dieu," are alike dangerous. To seek to do either is to destroy God.

We can conceive the longer or shorter sojourn of a few literary men under the shadow of a graceful deism, where, after having put themselves on a proper footing by duly paying their respects to the Master of the House, they think themselves at liberty to do as they please, making no more account of Him than if He did not exist. But that a whole people should be brought under the influence of an empty deism, even for the shortest possible space of time, is an absolute impossibility. The First Republic was able to defend the French frontiers by means of barefooted peasants armed with pitch-forks; to conquer Europe and beat the drum in all its capitals; but it could never establish deism in France; it could never form a philosophical system into a religion. The God who does not concern Himself about His creatures will never be the God of mankind. Robespierre said to the most excited Jacobins—"Atheism is aristocratic; the idea of a Supreme Being occupying Himself about oppressed innocence and punishing triumphant crime is altogether democratic." The God of Christianity is for man a guide, a confidant, and a friend. As to the Supreme Being in whom the philosopher believes, He may be saluted, but never approached.

To deny the efficacy of prayer, then, is to deny the miraculous, to deny Providence, to deny God.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SOUL.

THE POSTULATES OF KANT: DUTY, LIBERTY, IMMORTALITY.

"Now, bread, meat, drink, and whatever nourishes the body, has it more reality, more share in the pure essence, than true opinions, science, understanding, in a word, than all the virtues?"—PLATO, "Socrates to Glaucus," Chap. ix. Rep.

"The authority of conscience is mighty, and those who despise it despise themselves."—CICERO, "Tusc. Disp."

"God left man in the hand of his own counsel."—Eccl. xv. 14.

"If I fought with beasts at Ephesus, what doth it profit me if the dead rise not again?"—SAINT PAUL, 1 Cor. xv. 32.

WHAT young man seeing his soul, his liberty, his duty, and that which forms the basis of all these—God Himself and the future life—swept out of existence by the hand of human science, would not feel the cry of Michelet breaking forth from his heart—"They are robbing me of myself?" Such is the cry to which every virtuous and well-trained man will give utterance when he beholds the whole social system round him crumbling to pieces at the touch of science. "I have then no soul," he says. "I am but an animal like other animals." In presence of evolutionism, which literally besets modern thought, it is of vital importance to concentrate all the power and determination of spiritualism against the passionate attacks of those who deny the existence of either soul or spirit.

To be sincere we must, in the first place, admit that certain objections brought forward by materialism are very specious and very difficult to meet. We shall endeavour not to be unequal to the occasion, and it will be our aim to throw as much light as possible on this important question. We have this constantly in mind, for it is not

merely a religious crisis that we are passing through, it is a metaphysical crisis, since that which is threatened is pre-eminently human thought.[1]

I.

To the question—"Has man a spiritual soul?" three answers have been given. The materialist says—"No; the thinking part of man is organised matter, cerebral substance, nerve cells." The positivist answers—"We know nothing about it, it lies in the domain of the unknowable." The spiritualist replies—"Yes, man has such a soul; reason proves it."

To the question—"What produces thought?" the materialist answers—"The brain." The brain elaborates thought as the stomach elaborates food. This was the received opinion at the beginning of our century.[2] Broussais ridiculed "the little thing they call the soul," which he "had not found on the point of his scalpel." Cabanis and Destutt de Tracy referred the operations of the soul to a certain vibration of the nerves. From the fact that anatomy and physiology have shown a constant agreement between the functional working of the brain and the working of the mind, because it happens that matter has appeared to think, in some particular region, therefore the materialists of our day at once proclaim that, since there is a constant relation between the cerebral and the psychical apparatus, the latter is an effect of the former. Their great grievance in the matter of the soul is the dependence of our mental faculties on the brain; a dependence so strict that, when there is any lesion of the brain, the intellect seems to be affected in proportion to the degree of lesion.

[1] In "Le catholicisme et la libre pensée," the Abbé Charles Perraud relates a remark made to him by M. Hérold, Prefect of the Seine—"But, M. l'Abbé, it is not only Christianity, but spiritualistic philosophy also that we look upon as superstition." This remark very well expresses the state of mind of many of our contemporaries.

[2] After having professed the most degrading Materialism, Broussais ended by acknowledging God. He made the retractation of his errors in the following words—"To my friends, to my only friends! I feel, as do many others, that all things have been disposed with order by Intelligence. I confess to having but an incomplete understanding of my intellectual faculties, and I remain convinced of a Disposing Intelligence, which I dare not call creative, though it should be so."—*Le Droit*, Nov., 1841.

There is, therefore, no need, they say, to go in search of an undiscoverable cause of thought. To this objection we reply—The brain is, indeed, one of the conditions of the development and the exercise of the intellect, since experimental science has never found intellect apart from brain. Spiritualists admit this fact, which is true. But it is impossible, with our present scientific knowledge, to ascertain in what this correlation consists, or, indeed, in what the perfection of the brain consists. "What common measure can be found," says Gavarret, "between a quantity of heat which has been absorbed and has disappeared and a thought expressed or simply conceived? Until such a common measure be found we shall consider ourselves warranted in affirming that the first phenomenon is the cause of the second."[1]

Moreover, if the brain is one of the essential conditions for the exercise of our spiritual faculties, it is not, on that account, thought. The brain is a necessary instrument, if you will, in the present state of our soul and body; it is like the tool in the hands of the workman; but the spirit can no more be assimilated with cerebral matter than we can be thought to be one with the telescope which we use for perceiving the rings of Saturn. When the instrument is broken the objects which it helped us to perceive no longer exist for us; but it does not follow that we are one and the same thing with the instrument, by means of which we communicate with the world of tangible things. Of what use to go further? Granted even that the knowledge of the connection between the nervous system and the intellect had been obtained; granted, too, that all the mental functions were accurately localised in the brain, the problem does not lie there. It has to be shown that, if the

[1] "Les phénomènes physiques de la vie," preface, p. xii. We may assume that the brain is the organ of the mind, the instrument of the intellect, just as the pen is the instrument by means of which I commit my thoughts to writing. If I have a bad pen, I must write indifferently; if my pen is broken, I cannot write at all. Yet my thoughts are unimpaired, though I am unable to express or leave a record of them. Similarly, the soul cannot express its ideas when the only means of communicating them, the brain, is defective. The soul of a madman is sane, though it cannot express itself rationally through the defective instrument of the lunatic's diseased brain. Nor, while it is united to the body, can it ordinarily possess any other means of communicating its impressions than the brain, upon the healthy condition of which it has to depend.

nervous system is an instrument necessary for the exercise of the intellect, it is not the only condition; that there is an unknown cause, beyond the reach of microscope and scalpel, which disturbs and disconcerts all our calculations, and, to quote a witness who is not to be mistrusted, that "there is an unknown quantity which cannot be tested by weight or measure."[1] Another materialist, M. Ferrière, writes thus—"There is, then, in the brain, an unknown element on which science has not yet decided. This unknown element, which eludes both weight and analysis, may be called QUALITY."[2] We have an invincible repugnance in believing that our noble intellect is but the result of a certain combination of atoms. There is an "X" in the question of the human intellect, an "X" which no one will eradicate by any decisive verifications. This "X" is spiritualism, which explains it better than any other system, by admitting that thought is not material. Thus, it is certain that some men must have had brains, which, as regards their constituent atoms, were equal to the brains of a Napoleon and a Göethe. Why were Napoleon and Göethe men of a unique type? Why, since these men have existed in the world, has there been but one Shakespeare and one Molière? Why, in the eighteenth century, was there only one Voltaire? Why is not the French mind like the German or the English mind? We do not find, among other peoples, the brilliancy of a French wit. The wit of Heine is not that of Voltaire or that of About. It is sometimes very refined and very keen, but there is something characteristic in Voltaire and About which we do not find in Heine. Again, the French mind differs from the English mind; from the bitter sarcasm, for instance, of a Swift, or the humour of a Shaftesbury, that pleasantry of a well-bred man who scarcely moves a muscle. These observations show that there is variety in the human race which pure matter cannot explain. Such an argument, without being reduced to an equation, may define a man.

We cannot perceive the soul, say the materialists; it escapes the researches of the most perfect instruments, therefore we have a right to deny its existence. This

[1] Paul Bert, "Anatomie et physiologie animale," p. 291.
[2] "La vie et l'âme."

objection deserves only to be met with contempt. It is absurd to say—"My scalpel has not come in contact with the soul, therefore there is no soul." If the soul could be seen, if it were a subject of experiment, if it could be separated as a constituent by chemical analysis, clearly it would not be the soul. It would, unquestionably, be matter. The soul does not fall under the senses, because it is immaterial. Besides, we may say to the materialist —"You profess to believe only what you have seen, touched, or felt. But have you ever seen the brain produce a thought? You tell us that nothing can enter our understanding but by the senses; bring your microscope to the rescue, and we defy you ever to perceive through the senses the production of thought by the brain." We know very well that experiment does not absolutely exclude hypothesis, but it admits it only on the condition that the hypothesis be capable of verification. But can you verify the hypothesis in question? You have on one side the brain, which is subject to sensation, experience, and all the processes of the experimental system, and, on the other, thought, which absolutely defies all your processes, as well as your instruments. If one of the terms is wanting to your syllogism, how will you establish your conclusion? Thus you propose an hypothesis, and then you dogmatise like metaphysicians.

Materialists add—"As there is no matter without force, so there is no force without matter." Unquestionably there is no matter without force, but is it equally certain that there is no force without matter? Evidently there is no force without some substance in which the force resides, but we cannot affirm that there is no substance which is not material. This is the question at issue. Psychical phenomena are altogether different from physical phenomena. Has materialism eliminated the intervention of a third agent, acting as cause? Thought certainly requires a physiological phenomenon as its principal condition, but thought is something more than a movement, it is an act of consciousness. It is, in fact, something interior and purely immaterial, which none of us can grasp except within ourselves. Why does the mere movement of material particles or of nerve cells give rise to a

conscious act, that is to say, to a thought, to an act of the intellect and of the will?[1] How does it come to pass that, in examining the elements of knowledge, we find therein quite a group of super-organic operations? The reason is that there exists there an unknown cause, which must be immaterial. The soul is the integral being, the EGO; the body is only its livery, a veil thrown for a while over its divine essence. To deny the spiritual nature of the soul is to make of man a mere thinking machine. It is an extension to man of Descartes' romance on animals.

Against the soul there is the *Objection of the Lyre*, a radical objection not easy to refute. This was M. Rénan's objection when he wrote—"L'âme nait à propos de la matière." Might not the soul be a resultant, a harmonious whole produced by the combination of chemical elements? This is the principal objection which materialists bring forward. Simias before this raised the same objection to Socrates in prison—"Might we not say, Socrates, as you say of the soul, that the harmony produced by a well-tuned lyre is something invisible, incorporeal, beautiful, divine, whilst the lyre itself and its strings are material elements of a purely earthly nature? Might we not say, therefore, that after the lyre has been broken to pieces, the strings cut or destroyed, the harmony perishes not, but exists for ever?"[2] "But," replied Socrates, "if the soul were only a harmony, and not a living unity, far from commanding its constituent elements it would obey them. Do we not see that the soul rules as it pleases the elements of which it is said to be composed; that it resists them during almost our whole life, and that it manifests in a thousand ways its superiority over them, reducing some by the fatigue of bodily exercise, or by suffering in the appliances of medicine, subduing others by milder measures; threatening these, warning those, and addressing desire, anger, and cruelty as things of a nature different from her own?" The answer of Socrates may be made more complete. When

[1] That is to an *actus humanus*, not merely an *actus hominis*. The former is an intelligent act of a conscious human being, the latter is the act of a human being who is unconscious of it, such as a lunatic, a person under the influence of narcotics, stimulants, hypnotism, somnambulism, etc., or an infant.

[2] "Phoedrus."

lyres are made of the same materials and with the same perfection, they always produce the same harmony. The human brain is the lyre of which Socrates speaks. In the case of robust and normally constituted people, the brain partakes of the same characteristics. It is composed of the same nervous matter and of the same grey substance. Yet how great a difference the harmonies which these different lyres produce! The lyre of a Bossuet gives out a very different sound from that of a Paul Albert, who declares that "the round of Bossuet's ideas is soon made."[1] Spiritualists attribute this difference to the soul, and they are not altogether wrong. So we see that fools are of some use at least in the world; for they furnish us, by their very folly, with a tolerably spiritual and precise proof of the spiritualistic view.[2]

The intellect is a still greater mystery to us than life. "From all material bodies put together you will never extract one spirit," says Pascal. From all sensations which cannot themselves be explained by nervous vibrations, you will never extract a thought. From all the vibrations of ether, transformed into sight or hearing, you will never derive the infinite, the absolute, the universal. On the contrary: "I know one imperfect thing which can conceive perfection, a finite thing which can conceive the infinite, the absolute." This saying of Descartes will never be refuted. If the perfect and the absolute are perceived by a being imperfect and finite, it is because they exist outside, and above, that imperfect and finite being.

This great problem of thought has been brought under the laws of evolution by Spencer. He proposes as the basis of his system a permanent force, which can neither diminish nor increase, but only transform itself. This system, according to Spencer, should enable us to construct *knowledge reduced to absolute unity*. The intellectual life is not at first distinguishable from the physical; it is built up, gradually, by successive additions. Every generation contributes its quota to this intellectual treasury, which constitutes the human mind. According to Spencer,

[1] The round of his own ideas is much sooner made!

[2] Carlyle asserted that the population of Great Britain numbered thirty-three millions, "mostly fools."

thought is but the "transformation of molecular action." What gives this system its unity is also the ground of its weakness. Spencer's principle has no initial evidence. We might imagine a world that was not subject to it. It cannot be verified to its full extent. It is only deduced from partial experiences, which are always susceptible of error. Science acknowledges that not every phenomenon is reducible to mechanism, and, consequently, that a purely mechanical system is inadequate to express the totality of the beings and transformations in the world. We cannot, then, conclude, from the fact that force is permanent, that there is only one, and that the mechanical, manifestation of it, nor deduce from it all the manifestations of life, thought included. Matter which seeks to understand itself is not merely matter. Motion which is conscious of itself is not merely motion. The total of an addition can only be the sum of the figures which compose it. To develop thought from mechanical force, without taking into consideration the moral life, one must, in the course of the process, have surreptitiously interpolated new quantities. This is the conclusive objection to the theory of evolution as applied to the problem of knowledge. At each step of the development it introduces, between the antecedent and the consequent, an element which did not exist in the antecedent. How little soever the interval may be, it makes an insuperable difficulty, and we cannot escape from this dilemma. Either universal ideas are in germ at the commencement of evolution, and then they are not created by it—it develops them; or, they appear at some stage or other during the process of evolution. In either case they have a very certain beginning.

II.

Moreover, our inmost sense tells us clearly of the distinct existence within us of ideas, of thoughts, and of the soul. The truths of perception have a power of conviction which purely abstract truths, such as those of dialectics, or of mathematics, have not. It would be more impossible for me to doubt of a sensible pain than of a purely abstract truth. There is nothing more forcible

than a conscious fact. After all, mathematical truths are only constructed truths. We are obliged to conceive, as we do, the ideas of number and of space according to our intellectual organisation. But, considered absolutely, is our conception true? Suppose that there is an absolutely pure intelligence, independent of the brain, the question stands thus—Are these truths the same to such an intelligence as they are to us? While, on the contrary, if we suffer, we suffer, and that from an absolute point of view. A conscious fact outweighs all theories, whether philosophical or mathematical, as a reality which may justly be considered certain. You may tell us, with Taine, that "the universe is a universal phenomenon"; that "there is no substance." We can no more verify the assertion than he can who makes it. But, whatever possible systems there may be about the origin of things, what we experience is certain if anything is. This is the exclamation of all great thinkers. St. Augustine answered the Academicians—*Si fallor, sum.*

Now, conscience directly asserts the unity of the EGO. I think, I suffer, I enjoy, I love, I hate, I will, I am conscious of my thoughts, of my sensations, of my feelings, of my determinations; and at the same time I am conscious of the unity of the EGO, which thinks, feels, and wills. Moreover, the unity of this EGO is the necessary condition of conscience. "If I were not simple, but complex, composed of many substances, my conscience would not be simple either. It would be composite, which implies contradiction, or rather it would not be at all. I should not be conscious of myself; I could not say, I, the EGO. One might as well say one did not exist."

Again, it is conscience which assures us of our personal identity. But here it is not sufficient by itself, for it could not, by itself, furnish us with the idea of time; it must be assisted by memory. Let us take, for example, a continuous effort. When I make an effort for the first time, I am conscious of the act of which I am the cause; and at each successive moment I am conscious of the act which is going on. At the same time, and in each successive moment, memory recalls all the successive cognitions I have had of the effort during its continuance.

But, besides this continuous succession of efforts, I perceive my own continuance. I catch sight of my personal identity through the successive phenomena of which I am the cause. The identity of the Ego is affirmed by consciousness aided by memory. For, were I not always identical with myself, the perceptions which I recall would be those of another. I am, then, a being simple and identical with myself. This is as much as to say that my substance is not any material substance. What, we may ask, is the constant, essential attribute of matter? It is extension, that is to say, the three dimensions, and by consequence divisibility. The idea of unity, of simplicity, of identity contradicts this essential attribute of matter. Matter is perpetually changing. My body is for ever receiving new particles, and getting rid of old ones.[1] This is called the Vital Vortex. Heraclitus said—"We do not bathe twice in the same river," for neither is the river nor the body the same. If the Ego, one and identical, cannot be confounded with material substances, it follows that it is a substance distinct from the body. Against this unity of the Ego are objected the gaps in memory and in consciousness. A part of our past is sunk in oblivion, and consciousness only takes cognisance distinctly of the things that attract our attention. If memory were anything more than a function of the brain, it would seem that very vivid recollections would never be effaced. The fading away of impressions is only a part of the objection, resting on the fact that thought, with its different qualities, varies according to the condition of the brain. We have said above—"We do not deny that the operations of the soul depend on the state of the brain." This is one of the present conditions of the action of the soul. But no one will ever prove that it is the brain alone that brings about the action of the soul. We know well enough that the idea of the Ego is not composed of bits and fragments of memory. Every man, when he says Ego—"I myself"—is conscious that he is indivisible and has always the same personality, notwithstanding the weaknesses and failures of memory. And what can it matter if consciousness have intervals of repose throughout its incessant

[1] Chauffard, "La vie," p. 172.

ebbings and flowings? We feel certain that we are always the same person, the same Ego, though we may be subject to many modifications. Underlying the phenomena of consciousness, there is always a permanent and indivisible element. The unity of consciousness proves the existence of the soul. It may be suggested that this unity is, as Taine says, an illusion; that it is only an effect; yet we feel, nevertheless, that we are always the same Ego.

But let us leave the Ego, such as consciousness and memory reveal it to us, and let us take *any single thought*, and it will bring us to the same conclusion. The unity which asserts itself in the Ego interpenetrates all our reasonings, since all reasoning is made up of judgments; and a judgment consists in applying an attribute to a subject, and to do this we must compare the one with the other.[1] Suppose a comparison has to be instituted between three different perceptions. If the Ego were not simple, it would be composite. Let A B C represent the different substances of which the Ego is composed. In which, I ask, will the comparison take place? It cannot do so in A, because it is impossible for A to compare a perception which it has with one which it has not. For the same reason it cannot take place either in B or in C. We must, therefore, admit a point of union, a substance, which shall be at the same time the simple and indivisible subject of these three perceptions. This is the classical argument. De Laromiguière has developed it with equal clearness and precision. "A substance," says this eminent philosopher, "admits of no comparison, unless it comes under the cognition of two distinct ideas or perceptions at the same time. If the substance be extended, or composed of parts, even if only of two, where will you place the two ideas? Shall they both be in each part, or one in one part and one in the other? You must choose between these, for there is no middle course. If the two parts are separate, comparison is impossible; if they are both in each part there are two comparisons at once, and, consequently, two substances to compare, two souls, two Egos, or even a thousand, if you suppose the soul composed of a thousand parts! We cannot, then, imagine the soul to be composite and

[1] Paul Janet, "Traité de philosophie," p. 819.

material without depriving it of the faculty of comparison, or without admitting plurality in the Ego, a plurality of persons. But the soul does make comparisons, and in man there is neither plurality in the Ego nor plurality of persons. The soul, therefore, is neither composite nor material."[1] This reasoning is unimpeachable. "It is a very old argument," reply our adversaries. That is true, but it is easier to say the argument is "old" than it is to refute it.

Again, we can prove the existence of the soul by the principle of causality. If this principle were merely a creation of our mind, it would have no demonstrative value on behalf of spiritualism, but it is an immediate *intuition* of the mind, and we do not invent it. It is an integral part of our mental mechanism. Even men who never reflect or make a psychological analysis are ruled by this principle. They desire to know the why and the wherefore of things. They seek the reasons of causes and the cause of effects, and are not satisfied until they find them. As soon as reason dawns in a child, he persecutes those about him with his "how's" and "why's." We are sometimes astonished at the deep questions put by a child who has never studied any philosophy or exercised his little brain. The child knows instinctively that there is a reason for everything. Has he ever heard of the principle of causality? His "how" and his "why" are the natural interpretation of this principle. Hume, the most inveterate sceptic that ever lived, so well understood the strength of this argument, that he struggled desperately, though unsuccessfully, to overthrow it. It is difficult, indeed, to escape the consequences of the principle of causality. This anxious seeking after the reason of things supposes intelligence. It cannot be admitted that such a strong desire in man results from a necessity of matter. If we have an intellect, it must come from an intelligent being, and then spiritualism is proved to be true.

III.

But our adversaries attack the soul less from an ontological point of view than as the principle of responsibility

[1] "Leçons de philosophie."

implicating the whole moral order. It matters little to us that our soul is a substance absolutely differing from material substances. What it is important for us to know is that we are *free* beings; the principle of freedom is within us. In seeking the lines of demarcation existing between man and brute we have come upon reason. Man has reason, the brute has none; moreover, *man is a free agent.*

Determinism, which is only another name for fatalism or moral atheism, denies the liberty of man. According to determinists, we are not directed by motives, but by instinct. Man, the machine, replaces man, the free agent. "Man does not accomplish deeds, he only produces effects."[1] Conscience, on the contrary, proves that we are free under certain conditions and within certain limits. We must first eliminate all abnormal or unhealthy conditions. We are concerned here neither with facts over which the will has no control, such as the course of the stars or the circulation of the blood, nor with exterior facts contrary to physical laws, nor with interior acts against which we meet with resistance. For instance, man cannot fly; he cannot walk if bound with chains. Free will is a conscious act; but here we must make a distinction. Man is not free in *all* his conscious acts. He is powerfully influenced by the desire of happiness; he has an instinctive love of life and hatred of death. But how great a scope still remains for free will, since it can differ *ad infinitum* as to that in which, rightly or wrongly, it places its idea of happiness; and since, the choice being once made, it can propose a thousand different ways of realising it! There is also a distinction to make as to the exercise of free will. There is the case in which the mind does not discern any sufficient motive for acting in one way rather than in another, and the case in which the reason does perceive motives of more or less importance for or against a particular mode of action. The mind compares these motives; it deliberates and chooses. This is free will. It is a mental act of choice or of decision. This being admitted, the domain over which free will travels becomes more limited. Being free from all physical law, the will finds itself confronted by the moral law,

[1] Naquet, "Religion, famille, propriété."

which binds it and imposes upon it duties—obligations; the natural law, engraven on the conscience; and the positive law, established by human society. But as regards the moral law, though man is bound by it, he can still go against his conscience and break the law. These are the limitations of the will. It matters little that man is a very complex being, subject to the influence of hereditary transmission, of physiological developments of education and of experience! His will rises superior to all these things, and remains free.

The great proof of our liberty consists in the undeniable sense we have of it. Our conscience directly affirms our liberty, even in indifferent things; with much greater reason, therefore, does it do so in matters of moral consequence. He who deliberates is conscious that he can choose the one or the other of two things in question. At the time of choice he is conscious of performing a distinct act, of which he is the only and the immediate cause. I suppose myself in a thoroughfare. Three different roads are before me. I determine to follow one of them in preference to the others; I am conscious of having made a free choice. Or I suppose myself a minister of State; I find myself necessitated either to give up my appointment or to perjure myself. After deliberation I choose either ruin or dishonour. In either case I am conscious of having made my resolution freely. We can understand Bossuet saying—"A man whose mind is not preverted needs no proof of his free will, for he feels it; and he feels as surely that he is free to deliberate and choose, as that he can see and hear." Determinism is the old fatalism against which our personal liberty protests. Whence comes the idea of liberty? How could we conceive it if the fact were chimerical? The consciousness of my free will is as clear and as real to me as the consciousness of my existence. This is the theory of *free volition* so brilliantly supported by Maine de Biran, "our master in all things," as Roger-Collard called him. I will and I move my arm, because I am pleased to move it. The act of free will is a conscious act, and there is an insurmountable difference between a conscious act and a mere movement. The more reflection we bestow upon an action, the more freely are we said to

have acted. Reason and free will are not antagonistic; they interpenetrate each other. Conscience may become a battlefield, on which free will contends against our other faculties. But the will always chooses freely between any motives which present themselves, and it always comes off conqueror. Conscience is to it an impregnable fortress. You may torture and kill a man, but you cannot destroy his will.[1] This is extinguished only with life. Even those who raise objections against this fact act upon it in their daily conduct as absolutely as we do. They have the happiness of being inconsequent![2] If certain philosophical sects profess fatalism, experience shows that, in practice, fatalists act after the same manner as the advocates of free will. Now, in the matter of conviction we must consider both words and actions. Besides, this proof is so convincing, that it would be mere loss of time to formulate and solve all the objections and all the subtleties of the determinists. We can understand that men who, like Taine, have pledged themselves to a system will not open their eyes to facts which tell against it. "I do not believe," they say, "there has ever been a single disinterested action since the beginning of the world!" We, on the contrary, declare that there have been thousands every day. The man who, a few years ago, in the disastrous affair in Saint Gervais, rushed to the assistance of the unhappy victims, and broke both his legs in the attempt to save them, was, I think, disinterested, and free not to have so acted.[3] St. Vincent de Paul was free when he took upon himself the care of the galley slaves. The Sisters of Charity and the Hospitallers, who devote their youth and their energies to the service of the poor, the sick, and the wounded, are free to perform, or not to perform, these heroic acts. When a man devotes himself spontaneously to certain works, in spite of contrary interests, and in spite of the instinct of self-preservation, he is not, surely, obeying an automatic impulse, or a merely rational calculation. The sentiment that determines his

[1] "By force hypocrites, not converts, are made," said Fénelon.
[2] M. Naville, "Le libre arbitre," p. 158.
[3] The same may be said of several heroic persons who, at imminent risk, entered a burning bazaar in the Rue Goujou at Paris, in May, 1897, and saved many lives. Numerous similar cases occur every day.

conduct appertains to a higher and ultimate ideal, the origin of which positivists can no more explain than they can that of conscience. Explain, if possible, why self-sacrifice is the rule with some people and egoism the normal principle with others. To say they act by instinct is absurd. Instinct, if it were such, ought to act uniformly; and man, if he were not free, would obey, inevitably, the instinct of self-preservation, which is one of the laws of his nature. It is, therefore, only because he is free that he is able to set himself free from that law, to take up arms against his body, and say to it—"I desire not to live, therefore you must die!" To affirm that a particular motive is the most powerful in itself because it determines my action is begging the question; it is as much as to say "When I will I do not will freely." It is not true that man always acts from feeling or according to his inclinations. He often acts from reason and from duty, and this is the best motive of action; but he chooses the best freely, since he can choose the opposite if he will. "Common sense has never been deterministic."[1] Good sense believes in free will, and proves it. Lucretius himself admits in a man a certain independent power, *Vis nominis expers.* He calls it, elegantly, *fatis avulsa potestas.* There is no more precious homage paid to human liberty than that rendered by this philosopher, who finds himself obliged to give it a place in a system which it has no right to enter. This belief is so natural to all minds, that materialists who deny liberty would not dare to take a wager we could not make any particular movement we pleased when all our limbs are sound and unfettered. Their whole system falls to pieces before this challenge of our self-conscious will, a challenge which establishes for ever the just conviction of our moral responsibility. "It is a very simple thing," says M. Jules Simon, in his "Le Devoir," "to raise my hand three times in the space of an hour; it depends solely on my will to do it, or not to do it. If I am not free, this would depend on something extrinsic to my will. Very well! I propose that any one who thinks I am not free shall bet me a thousand crowns, a million, ten million, that I shall not raise my hand three times in

[1] Rabier, "Psychologie."

the hour. Who would accept the wager? No one. Who would hesitate to offer it? No one. This proves that every one believes in my power to make the movement if I please. Suppose three of us are in a room together, two may lay a wager between themselves that when I move I shall start with the right foot or with the left, but who would make the bet against myself? These are very simple facts, intelligible to the most limited understandings, but which have, nevertheless, the merit of establishing beyond all doubt that belief in the liberty of man is natural to all minds, and this is so true, that Sextus, Oenesidemes, Spinoza, and Hume, all of them philosophers denying free will, would never dare to bet against me that, my limbs being sound and unfettered, I should not raise my arm in the space of an hour. Their scepticism, triumphant in argument, would fall to the ground before my self-conscious will." [1]

An intelligent man who has exercised his reason, a man of healthy mind who has exercised his will often in the course of his life, who has triumphed over the most violent passions, and resisted the strongest attractions, such a man would find it hard to be a materialist, because he has, in a manner, *felt his soul.* How can he believe that he is only *material,* when he has been victorious in such conflicts? The exercise of liberty is one of the most convincing proofs of the existence of the soul, of a principle other than material. To believe the contrary, we should have to conclude that matter can act freely, and be conscious of its liberty. When a man wills a thing in earnest, and decides upon a certain course, he feels what he wills. How is it that in presence of a violent exterior attraction, a man can, in cold blood, brace up all the energies of his will and say—"Well, no! For such or such a reason, for God, or for honour, I will not do that." At times, even, he may say—"No man sees me. Only God sees me. These enchanting temptations! I will reject them, I will not look upon them!" There are certainly many facts of this kind in daily life, and when a man can act thus, it is, surely, difficult to believe that he is only a material being.

Another strong argument for the soul is that drawn from

[1] 1st Part, Chap. i.

deliberate martyrdom. It is the same as the argument drawn from liberty, but pushed to its utmost consequences. Man has an invincible horror of death. If he were only material, how could matter produce in him the resolution to die? And not only the resolution to die a particular kind of death, but even death amidst excruciating torments. The martyrs acted thus, contrary to all the instincts of nature. M. Nourrisson puts these words into the mouth of the martyr—"Behold my body, it is loaded with chains, it is scourged, it is torn in pieces, it is submitted to the most cruel tortures, it is about to be mangled by the teeth of wild beasts: a howling and threating populace stands around! A word, or even a syllable from me will save me, but that word, or that syllable, no power, no violence, can force from me."[1] The "Ego" which resists after this fashion, in spite of the weakness of the body, is certainly not the body. Fatality cannot be urged in such a case as this. M. Taine was well aware that if one single disinterested action could be proved, his whole system would fall to the ground. This is why he maintained that there was no such thing.[2] To sacrifice one's life for an idea is to silence materialism. To explain heroism, or pusillanimity, by the necessitating properties of matter, does not seem quite reasonable. M. Rénan felt this, when he confessed that martyrdom was the most formidable fact that could be brought against all negative doctrines.

We cannot omit here an objection which involves the denial either of liberty or of providence. This objection is the *Divine foreknowledge.* The very definition of a free act precludes its being foreseen, because it is contingent. A free act is an indeterminate act. Now, the indeterminate cannot be known as determinate, But this is what we maintain when we say that God foreknows all our free acts.

[1] "Portraits et études, De l'âme," p. 301.

[2] How tyrannical must be the spirit of system, if a man of such disinterested loyalty as M. Taine, who braved all the outcries of certain of his partisans that had become his most inveterate enemies, who would never, as he said himself, do more than follow his profession as historian, without troubling whether his historical criticisms might turn against himself, if such a man can have persistently denied free will. M. Henrich, one of his companions at the normal school, said to him, and with reason—"Yes, my old schoolfellow, what explains this disinterestedness, this loyalty, is not a mechanical combination of atoms, it is the energy of an immaterial and free soul." "La légende jacobine et la critique."—*Correspondant*, 1874.

How can an act not resolved upon, which is equivalent to nothing at all, since it does not exist, be known positively by God? If it is foreknown by Him, what becomes of liberty? St. Thomas answers that since there is no succession of time in God, He knows as determinate, with regard to Himself, what, with regard to us, is indeterminate. This seems hardly possible. *Qui potest capere, capiat.* Man is not really free unless he can freely choose which out of several actions he will perform. Now, until he chooses, the action does not exist, how, therefore, can God know it? Some spiritualistic philosophers try to escape the difficulty by saying that the prescience of God does not extend to future free acts. Charmes, a philosopher of the present century, said—"In the name of human morality, let us limit the foreknowledge of God!" Cicero hesitated before the apparent impossibility. But if there be mystery in this matter, there is no contradiction. There would, perhaps, be contradiction were we to say that God, like man, is subject to the laws of time, that he knows beforehand our free acts in such sort that they cannot be otherwise than He has foreseen. But this we do not say. We know that God is eternal; that He exists necessarily of Himself. Reason tells us no more than this. "If, then, Eternity is to God but as one single moment, one eternal present, the all-seeing Eye, beneath which our free actions successively unroll themselves, no more impedes our liberty than the presence of a spectator interferes with the liberty of those whom he sees acting before him. Strictly speaking, God does not *foreknow*, He *knows*. Knowledge, in the Infinite Being, excludes the idea of time, because it excludes the idea of change and succession. God does not foresee, He sees."[1] Man, then, is a free agent, and God has made him free, that he may merit his salvation, or be responsible for his reprobation. But this reasoning only half satisfies us. Such an idea, though it may not appear contradictory, is at least beyond us. We should have no hesitation in boldly confessing it to be a mystery. Bossuet himself offers no explanation of this difficulty; he contents himself with saying, in substance—"On the one hand we have the undeniable sense of our liberty, we cannot therefore refuse

[1] P. Janet, "Traité de philosophie."

to admit it; on the other hand, the idea of God, which our reason approves, necessarily implies that He knows everything, can acquire no new knowledge, and can be ignorant of nothing. These two things appear contradictory; we must, nevertheless, hold fast the two ends of the chain, though we may not perceive all the links that hold these truths together." One can easily comprehend that a man who believes in a positive religion, and who is convinced that God is its Author, admits all that Bossuet says; but to believe it firmly, and at the same time only speculatively, is difficult. A Christian is not embarrassed by this position, for we who know that the Decalogue is divine are sure that God knows the whole future. Jesus has told us that God His Father knows all the actions of men, both present and future, both voluntary and involuntary. The prophets foretold the Babylonian captivity; the time and the place of the birth of Jesus Christ, and that He would be put to death under certain circumstances. Jesus Himself foretold His Passion, His Resurrection, the destruction of Jerusalem, the dispersion of the Jews, and the triumph of the Church. All these were future events, dependent on the will or caprice of men. If Jesus and the prophets spoke the truth, then we must admit that God knows all things. Besides, what sort of God would He be if He did not know all things? To admit a God thus imperfect would be to deny future judgment, immortality, and the life to come. If God knows our actions only successively, as we accomplish them, He knows them only as a finite being might know them. If He learns to-day what He did not know yesterday, with regard to acts dependent on our will, He is subject to the laws of time. There would then be room for hope that He might forget some of our actions; but if so, He would be no God! It is wiser, though more mysterious, to admit that God knows all our free acts from all Eternity, than to suppose that He knows them only as other beings do, after they are produced. Another consequence of this false view would be, that as men multiplied, they would be able to overturn God's designs altogether. He could not have a premeditated plan in which all human wills should concur. Prophecies would be impossible, or would be fulfilled only by chance. It would be better, then, to deny God altogether,

than to believe Him to be ignorant of our free acts. "Besides," says M. Janet in his "Causes finales," "we have too strong a sense of the limitations of our own reason to limit the Absolute in obedience to our human conceptions!"

IV.

But what becomes of the vital principle, the soul, at the solemn moment of its departure from the body? This is the *problem of destiny*—a question asked unceasingly, even by those who affect to deny the future state. Strauss, so proud and so convinced of his scientific nihilism, feeling death at hand, asked that the beautiful words of Phoedo on the immortality of the soul might be read to him—"As to those who feel the need of personal immortality, I refer them to Moses, to the prophets, and to Jesus Christ!" Rénan, with his hands crossed on his breast and his eyes half closed, mused for long hours—so his friends said—asking himself in agony on what shore his soul would be wrecked. In fact, a man's whole mode of thinking and acting depends entirely on the view he takes and the attitude he assumes with regard to this matter.

Every man, sceptic though he may be, has once at least during his life—and the memory of that moment never passes from his mind—questioned himself as to his eternal future. The grand and varying scene of nature produces on us a mysterious effect. Every one, in the brilliancy of mid-day splendour or in the silence of a star-lit night, has asked himself—"What does all this mean? Why is there a world at all? When were those magnificent planetary systems first organised and when will they cease to be? What was their first cause and what will be their last end?" This is the mystery we cannot escape. It is the question the farthest from and yet the nearest to us. It is the dilemma which arrests the attention of the bravest. "*To be or not to be*, this is the great question." Have we a destiny, an ideal, a duty? Or must we struggle on without cause, without end, for the amusement of some malignant demiurge, or at the foolish caprice of the Great Pan? "This is the question which occupies all minds," says M. Desjardins in "Le Devoir présent."

Jouffroy puts before us, with sublime energy, the important question of our destiny. "In great towns," he says, "man seems to be the one affair of creation. There his apparent superiority displays itself. There he seems to govern the world, or rather concentrate its attention entirely on himself. But when this being, so powerful, so proud, so self-satisfied, so exclusively pre-occupied with his own interests within the precincts of the city and amidst the concourse of his fellows, finds himself all at once transported into the midst of the vast scenery of nature, where he stands alone beneath the boundless sky, facing the horizon stretched out far and wide, and beyond it other horizons, and yet others, amid those mighty natural productions, which reveal his insignificance, if not by their intelligence, at least by their bulk; then, as from the mountain height, he beholds, by the light of the stars, tiny villages burying themselves far below among forests that are themselves lost in the vast expanse of the landscape, he reflects that the villages are peopled by beings as small as himself; he compares these beings with the objects around them, these objects with our earth, on the surface of which all that his eye embraces is but a speck, and our world itself with the thousand other worlds suspended in the firmament, compared with which the earth is a mere nothing; at such a sight as this the man pities his miserable passions for ever thwarted, his miserable pleasures invariably ending in weariness and disgust, and next there comes to him the question, what is he doing here? while at the same time he puts the problem of destiny to himself."[1] Further on Jouffroy says—"I dare affirm that there exists not a man, however meanly born he may be, illiterate, or ill-favoured by nature, by fortune, or by men, who has not once at least in his life, under some grave circumstance, asked himself the decisive question which weighs so heavily on us all—'Why is man in this world, and what is the meaning of the part he plays therein?' The shepherd on the mountain side is also in the presence of nature; he also reflects for hours together on what he is and what those beings are who dwell in the valleys below; he also has had ancestors who have gone

[1] "Mélanges philosophiques," p. 314.

down into the grave, and he asks himself why they were born, and why, after having dragged out their life for a few years, they are now dead, and have made room for others, and how this goes on over and over again without end, and, seemingly, without reason. The shepherd dreams, as we do, of that infinite creation, of which he is but an atom; he loses himself in that long chain of beings, the ends of which he cannot grasp. He asks himself whether, as he is superior to the beasts he watches over, there are not other beings superior to him, and when he realises his misery, he easily conceives that there may be creatures more perfect, more capable of happiness, and gifted with a nature more apt to procure it. By his own right, on the authority of his own reason, which is called base and limited, he had the boldness to put to his Creator this profound and mournful question—'Why hast Thou made me, and what means the part I am playing in the world?'"[1]

Positivism has sought to deprive mankind of this hope of immortality implanted by God Himself in the depths of our being. After having denied the two spiritual substances—God and the soul—it should, logically, proceed to deny a future life, and should proclaim annihilation as our destiny when our vital organs cease to act. We are now assisting at a furious attack on the Christian and spiritual idea of immortality, to which the theory of evolution serves as a pretext. According to evolutionists, the idea of personal immortality has had its day. All that survives a man after death is the remembrance of the influence he once exercised around him. The individual dies, the race lives on, and in the race the influence each individual has transmitted to his successors, from first to last, perseveres. British materialism says—"When a man dies, all is dead. The tomb is an abyss which swallows up everything." "Science has failed to produce a single instance of life after death," writes M. Littré.

Does the soul exist after the dissolution of the body? Is the future life only imaginary? Can it be deduced from actual facts and from the eternal principles of reason?

A primary argument in favour of the immortality of the soul is its spirituality. If the soul is simple, as we have

[1] "Mélanges philosophiques," p. 411.

already proved, it is also immortal. "What is simple," says Leibnitz, "can only perish by annihilation." It would require an act of the Divine omnipotence to annihilate a soul. There can be no diminution of the intensity of being in an existence simple in its nature. Quality may change, but there can be no diminution of quantity. Death is not annihilation. It is only a physical and chemical disintegration of the material particles of our organism. And the soul being an immaterial substance cannot be subject to disintegration. It must subsist as it is. Besides, no substance perishes or is destroyed. Metaphysics affirm this in virtue of creation and of conserving Providence. This principle is fully justified with regard to matter by experimental science. Why, then, should a spiritual substance perish? Will it be said that it was created for an organic being, and that after the dissolution of that organic being there is no reason why the spiritual substance should continue to be? But when the organism is destroyed the material elements subsist. The soul should likewise live on, unless a new volition different from that of creation annihilates it; nevertheless, "Is it not certain," say the materialists, "that the soul dies with the body? At the moment of death all the activity of the soul ceases. Life is but motion, which bends before the obstacles it meets on its way, till at last it is conquered. All that, strictly speaking, we can conclude from this statement is that the soul has exhausted the amount of energy with which it was endowed, with a view to the present life."[1] This objection, moreover, has no weight, except in the case of death from old age and the natural gradual decay of our powers. But in the case of injury or accident, when a violent separation between body and soul occurs, death takes place under altered circumstances, and the objection is of no force whatever. Besides, the soul does not weary of life. Often in old age it has more energy, more light, more will, more ambition than in youth. "I feel," says Göethe, "that in my extreme old age there come to me ideas which cannot be worked out in this life." The old are more tenacious of life than the young, and find it harder to make the sacrifice of it.

[1] Farges, "La vie et l'évolution des espèces."

He who most nearly resembles the dead is the most unwilling to die. Fifty or sixty years of disease may have sorely tried the body; the soul may still resist while the body slowly decays. Admirable things have been written by the dying, and there is often an ardent soul in a body already chilled by the touch of death.

A decisive argument in favour of the immortality of the soul is the solution of the problem by all men in all ages. It is consoling to see, in the histories of varying theories, how rarely we find an avowed materialist. In Greece we have Lucippus, Democritus, and Epicurus; in Rome, Pliny and Lucretius. And, speaking of Epicurus, Cicero says—"I never saw any man more afraid of two things of which he said no one ought to be afraid, namely, death and the gods." As to Lucretius, Caro says of him—"Lucretius has but small faith in his own system. Even in his wrath against the gods, and in his violent hatred of all forms of superstition, there are a certain involuntary reverence, and a certain persistent faith which pursue him." Materialism is for the individual alone; we may term it sporadic. We have never seen an entire population materialistic. We may say of all nations what Cæsar said of the Gauls—"They seek to establish the belief that souls can never die." "This belief," Lucan tells us, "was the secret of their courage on the field of battle. Hoping to live on elsewhere they rushed intrepidly to death. Their souls became capable of death—*Animæ capaces mortis.*"

Hope of a future life is as deeply rooted in the human race as belief in God and the moral law, of which, indeed, it is the logical consequence. This belief gave rise to the worship of the Manes, and it endured through all the ages before the Christian era, among all peoples, even among the Hebrews, whose dead were said to go back to their fathers "into Sheol." It has, besides, existed always both in the minds of professed philosophers and in the hearts of the simple. This is as much as to say that it is immovable from the conscience, as are all revelations which are the patrimony of the whole human race. Consequently, mankind at large protests against materialism, and one of our greatest intellects has said—"O ye happy ones! who disbelieve the future life only because you fear it, hope not for

annihilation. No! No! hope not for that. Whether you will or not, your eternal existence is an assured fact." And, in the same breath, Bossuet points out the secret and undeniable motive of those who aspire to final annihilation: —"The materialist," says he, "resembles a man of high birth with low propensities, who ignores his dignity that he may not be obliged to act in accordance with it." In his "La Religion" M. Vacherot expresses the same opinion —"Not all unbelievers ought to be reckoned as free-thinkers. Many of them have been liberated from all belief rather by their appetites than by any process of reasoning." Göethe exclaims in Faust—"What are their doubts? They are often only the reflection of the foulness of their souls." And attributing his own thoughts to Prometheus, he says—"O my heart, my heart! Art not thou the maker of all things?" If Göethe was a Pantheist and his life full of egotism, if he shook off the idea of God it was not, he says, the work of his reason, but of his heart. And may not this, in some degree, be M. Rénan's history also? We may be allowed to believe so when we read the few lines he addressed to an old companion, M. Cognat—"I am in a state of mind which, in former times, would have made me shudder. But I have worked bravely at the development of my ideas. I have steeled myself to it, and I only wish the Orthodox a peace as deep as mine." May we not justly say, that a peace so dearly bought is due rather to the will than to the reason? M. Rénan owned as much when he said later on—"The man who sits down, but for one moment, to think of his future destiny, strikes an arrow into his heart which he will never be able to pull out."[1] "In fact the infidel often flies from the light because it condemns him; and, if he were sincere, he would answer those who ask an account of his infidelity with the words Cicero put into the mouth of Velleius—"Who could bear the yoke of a master whom he must fear night and day; one, too, who is mindful of everything and forgets nothing?"[2] So true is it, as Fichte says, that "our philosophic system is but the revelation of our heart."[3]

[1] "Discours de réception à l'Académie française," 3rd April, 1879.
[2] "De natura deorum," I., 54.
[3] "Théodic.," t. III.

"Atheism," says Plato, "is a disease of the soul before it becomes an error of the mind." In struggling against religious conviction most infidels think only of freeing their reason from mystery, their morals from constraint, and their conscience from remorse.

"Philosophise for yourself as much as you will," Voltaire used to say, "but if you have only a market town to govern, it must have a religion." It is sometimes asked, and with reason, what would the peasant and the labourer do without belief in God, in the soul, in a future state, and without the religious sentiment. They would think only of what immediately concerned themselves; they would be guided only by their impulsive instincts and would soon fall back into a savage state. Nothing but practical religion is of any service in the moral education of man. The masses, whom the Greeks call οἱ πολλοί, have always the sense of religion. Our Christian working men gladly kneel down at the sound of the blessed bell and rejoice to hear the Angelus ring out from belfry to belfry, to carry their new-born infants to the font, to receive their brides at the hand of the priest, to fall asleep at the close of life fortified by the holy unition. They will believe and they will hope. It is to the Church that, after their six days of toilsome labour, men love to come to revive within themselves a sense of the ideal. There remains but Sunday to elevate their thoughts. For six days they have been looking earthwards; on the Sunday they raise their eyes to Heaven. During six days they have thought only of providing for material wants; on Sunday they give their attention to their spiritual needs—

> Les bras ont travaillé; l'âme prend sa revanche;
> Car, redressant l'échine aux premiers carillons,
> Le rude paysan, le fils des noirs sillons,
> Courbé durant six jours, n'est droit que le dimanche.[1]

On feast days the whole parish repairs to the church. There the very atmosphere is steeped in the spiritual. The people understand the mysterious words. They fold their arms, fall on their knees, bend down their heads at the sound of the Acolyte's bell. They breathe in the perfumes of days gone by, refresh themselves with the wholesome

[1] Manuel, "Le repos du paysan."

memories of childhood, and of their first communion. In spite of themselves they succumb to the magic influence of the realities concealed beneath the symbolism which surrounds them. Dreams of Paradise steal over them. They see the Sacred Host in the hands of the priest. They hear his instructions; they sing, and they adore. The thought of a future life possesses even the least impressionable. Labourers and mechanics, on coming away from Mass, bring with them some sublime conceptions, an idea, not vague, but definite, of the great God and of His invisible justice. This victory over nothingness, this hope of a final deliverance, and of a sure and everlasting reunion with those we have loved here, is the most solid fruit of religion. Not one of our sciences, not one of our philosophic theories will ever produce a system for the relief of human misery half as efficacious as those simple articles of the Nicene Creed—"I believe in God, the Father Almighty, . . . in the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen."

V.

Generally speaking, the young make a compromise with the suggestions of their reason, and hold on to Christianity because they feel that, with loss of faith, comes loss of all morality. This conviction causes a severe struggle before a man can succeed in entirely shaking off his religion; a fact which implies that the moral order is inseparably bound up with the metaphysical questions of our origin and our destiny, to such a degree even that goodness, virtue, and duty postulate certain metaphysical solutions. The moral order has no longer any meaning, it is impossible to conceive of it apart from a spiritualistic explanation. Kant understood this, for he says that duty postulates free will and a future life, and that free will and a future life postulate God. Kant, though obstinately sceptical in metaphysical matters, had a noble soul; he was instinctively spiritualistic, and entrenched himself within the moral order. "I feel myself bound by the moral order," he said; "I have an unmistakable conviction of it. Now, obligation in matters of morality supposes liberty of action. If, as a

fact, I am not free, but am constrained to commit a certain act, I am not obliged to do it. This sense of obligation presupposes the future life. For, if I am obliged to do good—obliged to avoid evil—it can only be because there is, somewhere or other, an ideal of justice and of perfect holiness. This conclusion supposes the existence of God, and God, not as a mechanical explanation of the world, but God as an absolutely Holy Being, who is the Author of the moral law. If there were no future life God would not be God, because He would make no distinction between the practice of virtue and the practice of vice. Thus did Kant build up all moral truths on the basis of duty, and thence he formulated his famous postulates.

First, then, the moral law exists, and it demands free will. All men have an idea of duty, and an idea of merit and demerit which is inseparable from it. They form judgments and experience sensations with regard to acts performed by themselves or by others. Now, the idea of duty, and all the other ideas which flow from it, suppose belief in the liberty of man. "If I ought, I can," says Kant, "and if I can, I am a free agent."

Liberty is a postulate of morality. Man feels that there is a natural law to which he is subject, which sets before him the ideal of good and evil; a law so positive that it serves him as a criterion by which to judge human laws, and to determine whether any particular law is just or unjust. Kant declared himself rapt in admiration at the sight of this "firmament of the soul," far more beautiful than the starry vault of the natural heavens. "Conscience! Conscience!" exclaimed Rousseau, "divine instinct, heavenly and immortal voice, unerring guide of beings, ignorant and limited, yet intelligent and free." Who has not at one time or another been guilty, and who has not felt those secret reproaches of which St. John speaks?[1] Who has not heard that voice of conscience which, according to St. Paul, "speaks within us with unspeakable groanings"? On this subject pagans agree with Christians—"Here is a pain," cries Juvenal, "which surpasses the torments inflicted by Cedítius and Radamanthus, namely, the bearing about within

[1] "Quoniam si reprehendit nos cor nostrum."—1 Ep. iii. 20.

us night and day the witness of our crime."[1] "Look at them," he says elsewhere, speaking of criminals, "they tremble, then they turn pale at every flash of lightning; the first peal of thunder takes all life out of them."[2] Domitian, hidden in his palace, like a wild beast in his cave, cannot escape the invisible executioner which accompanies him even there. "In his profound retreat," says Pliny, "he had still with him a God, the Avenger of crime, *Ultorem sceleruni Deus inclusit*," that avenging god of whom Juvenal says that, "with an invisible scourge He strikes secretly the soul of the criminal, blow after blow."[3] This god is the sense of remorse. "It is very well to say that virtue is but a name," writes M. Jules Simon; "it will be a fatal day for us when we depart from it. Our nature will revolt against our theory. Our judgments with regard to right and wrong are indisputable. God has not willed that they should be only the cold appreciations of duty; an invincible sense of conviction goes along with them."[4] When any one acts he feels in the depth of his conscience either approval or disapproval, according as he has followed or swerved from his ideal of duty. He has a judge within him, whose judgment will not be reversed. This judge is distinct from the man. "He is disinterested, and superior to us," says Fénelon. "Nothing is less like the man than this invisible master, who teaches him, and who judges him so severely and by such a perfect rule. We cannot succeed in esteeming a thing merely because we would fain esteem it. We cannot break down the eternal barriers of truth and justice. After so many centuries of the bridled reign of vice, virtue is still called virtue, and cannot be dispossessed of her name, even by her most savage and most deadly enemies."[5] "The power of conscience is great, and

[1] "Pœna autem vehemens, ac multo sævior illis
Quas et Cæditius gravis invenit, et Rhadamanthus:
Nocte dieque suum gestare in pectore testem."
—Juvenal, Sat. XIII., v. 196.

[2] "Hi sunt qui trepidant, et ad omnia fulgura pallent,
Cum tonat, exanimes primo quoque murmure cœli."
—Sat. XIII., v. 223, 224.

[3] "Et surdo verbere cædit,
Occultum quatiente animo tortore flagellum," v. 194.

[4] "Le devoir," p. 268.

[5] Fénelon, "Traité de l'existence de Dieu," 1st Part, Chap. xi.

those who despise it despise themselves."[1] If man is not a free agent, we cannot understand why Cain should seek to hide himself away from the reproach of his fellows; why Oedipus should tear out his eyes after his incestuous crime; why Orestes should think the reproaches of his conscience to be furies running at his heels; why Tiberius should bury himself in the Isle of Caprera in order to escape from himself; why Lady Macbeth should see stains of blood upon her guilty hands, exclaiming, "Out, damned spot, out, I say." We only repent of what we have done because we feel we might have avoided doing it. It is an axiom of common sense that "where compulsion begins, responsibility ends." There is, then, no appeal from the decrees of conscience. *O Eterna auctoritas esto,* says the Law of the Twelve Tables. The moral satisfaction and the remorse which accompany the sense of responsibility, accompany also the sense of freedom.

Moreover, this idea of good and evil manifests its presence in society by the daily conduct of men, who deliberate before acting, issue orders, and address petitions and exhortations to their fellow-men. All people have some religion. Now, every form of religion, whatever it may be, frames prescriptions and prohibitions, enforced by threats and promises, which have no meaning if man is not a free agent. There are legislators everywhere, commissioned to make laws, and to inflict punishment on those who break them; magistrates, whose business it is to make proper application of the laws: a body of police to see that they are carried out. In Ancient Egypt men were judged after death. Greece bowed before the invisible tribunal of Minos. At Rome, unworthy citizens suffered the punishment of the Tarpeian Rock, and victorious generals were led in triumph to the Capitol. All languages tell of esteem and contempt, of love and hatred, of reward and punishment. The social organisation of all antiquity rested on this basis. The punishments inflicted on crime can be explained only by the recognition of duty on the one hand, and the possibility of freely acting in accordance with it on the other. The admiration all men had for virtue, the crowns and honours

[1] "Magna vis est conscientiæ, quam qui negligunt se ipsos contemnunt." —Tusculan, Disp.

conferred on heroes and famous citizens, are the application of the same principle. All social systems promise rewards to those who keep the laws, and impose penalties on those who break them. The proclamation of a law were an absurdity if not addressed to free subjects. Its application argues still more strongly for the freedom of those whom it concerns. Among civilised nations men are not condemned without a trial. The degree of responsibility attaching to the accused is taken into account. Aggravating or extenuating circumstances are urged and admitted. If the accused is not accountable for his actions he is placed in confinement; if he is held accountable, he is punished according to the degree of premeditation in his crime. Public opinion has ratified, and holds as sacred this method of action. Freedom of the will belongs not only to the individual man but to humanity in general. Read the narratives of those who have travelled, or go and travel yourself, and you will be convinced that the sense of duty is the ruling sense of the whole human race. This spontaneous and irresistible conviction forcibly gives the lie to the theory of fatalism. Determinists are but a small minority. The war they wage against free will is a scholastic quarrel. They are the most illogical of men in refusing to admit that man only becomes guilty by a conscious and wilful deviation from his duty, that he is a fate to himself and weaves his own destiny.

It is then a blasphemy to see in this noble instinct nothing but "a very simple piece of machinery which can be taken to pieces like the works of a clock,"[1] or to say—"Virtue is a production, like sugar or vitriol."[2] To deny virtue and the free will of man is to sap the foundations of modern civilisation. The recognition of this law and the practice of it are the indispensable conditions of all social progress. The accession of democracy after the abolition of slavery, of serfdom, and of the ruling classes, marks progress. It arises from the ideal of duty, well-conceived and developed. When the citizens of a nation yield themselves up to the tyranny of the senses—when they no longer believe in a standard of duty as irrevocable and unchangeable as God Himself, there can be neither virtue

[1] Taine, "Philosophie positive," p. 276.
[2] Taine, "Histoire de la littérature anglaise," introduction, p. xii.

nor social progress. Exterior laws do not exert a sufficient restraint. The social body becomes disunited, and only the most absolute despotism can prevent its utter dissolution. If man has no positive rule of action—a rule which nothing can set aside—if the movements of the spiritual automaton are as well regulated as those of the material world—then there is no such thing as crime, no such thing as virtue, no merit, and no demerit. Penal laws become monstrous iniquities. The social edifice ought to be entirely destroyed, and every one should abandon himself to the fury of his natural inclinations. In our day, especially, the many sophistries subversive of the rights of property, of family ties, and of the whole social constitution, are most dangerous. They flatter and legitimise the bad passions which ferment within the breast of the multitude. The longing for fresh pleasures and for immediate gratification is an unquenchable thirst which corrupts every human heart. Were it publicly proclaimed that man's natural instincts are to him the one and only moral law, every protection would be carried away, and we would become witnesses and victims of untold horrors. Released from the control of duty, men would be but strugglers for life. They would only need good eyes and a sure foot to guide them through the human ant-hill. The realisation of the moral law, on the contrary, delivers man from the thraldom of his senses, makes the citizen free, upright, and virtuous—the mechanic and the tradesman honest, and gives us men of learning, and of fine character, heroes too, and saints. In the presence of duty, strong souls, formed on the moral law, choose rather to die than to act against the dictates of conscience. "What mortal can be a just man if he fears nothing?"[1] Regulus, recognising the sanctity of an oath, resolutely returned to Carthage to meet his death there, saying—"It is better to die than to stain one's conscience." "*Mori potius quam fœdari*," exclaims feudal honour. "*Non facienda mala, ut veniant bona.*" We must not do evil that good may come, is the teaching of the Christian law;[2] and, in its divine spiritualism, it ranks

[1] Euménides, 699.

[2] This elementary principle is maintained in every Catholic treatise on moral theology, and yet one of the most popular taunts of the vulgar is that the Catholic Church, or, at anyrate, the Society of Jesus, sanctions the evil principle that it is lawful to do evil that good may come, the real teaching being—"*It is never, under any circumstances, lawful to do evil that good may come!*"

the dignity and responsibility of the soul in the sight of God far above the life of the body and all sensual gratifications.

If we cannot believe in duty without believing in free will, we cannot believe in duty and free will together without believing in God. Duty and free will postulate God. God is Absolute Good, as He is Absolute Being. Hence, goodness is neither more nor less than conformity with the conception of God within us. On what basis can we rest the idea of the good and of the moral, which we are conscious of within us, if we reject the idea of God? In order that the deliberate will may triumph over blind instinct it needs support. This it can only find in the sense of duty and in a law superior to that of appetite. When thirty years ago an attempt was made to introduce what was called "Independent Morality," there was great opposition. It was recognised that such a system of morality would sink humanity to lower depths than paganism; that it was a personal affair, without basis or sanction; that to take away from morality the idea of God was to build a castle in the air. The system with which we were threatened then has now for a long time been held in honour. Our whole modern scholastic system is based on the negation, or, at least, on the ignoring, of God. The new morality is gaining ground rapidly among the masses. "All moral truths can be taught," wrote Paul Bert, "without having recourse to metaphysical obscurities or the thunders of Sinai." Such morality is the logical consequence of materialism. In fact, if, as has been taught, thought is only the result of the action of the grey matter of the brain, it follows that a man's acts will depend solely on the condition of his brain, and, hence, can never be voluntary, from which it follows that there can be no responsibility, no merit, no future life, no immortal soul, and no Supreme Judge.

But morality without God is no morality, because, in this hypothesis there can be no such thing as duty, since there is no one with authority to command. In the same way there is no sanction, because such a morality can be only a suggestion, or at most a counsel. The consequences are manifest. Man follows the instincts of nature. He is like a gentle lamb if his instincts are kindly, or like a

voracious saurian if they are cruel. Examine statistics, consult the criminal courts. The number of assaults, crimes, and suicides increases with frightful rapidity, we might indeed be living in the worst days of paganism. The criminal has at least the right to maintain that he is not a free agent, that instinct is his only guide, that he does not deserve punishment because he does not believe in God. Is it not well known that the anarchists, who have made themselves a name in the world and whose destructive doctrines have spread far and wide, the Ravachols, Vaillants, Henris, and Caserios declared openly that they believed in nothing at all. Their ruling principle, over and above their hatred of all authority, was total disbelief. "The masses have long been patient under social injustices, because their desires and their hopes have been anchored elsewhere. Convinced that this life is for them the herald of a better, that every suffering is in its own way a favour, preparing for the patient man a munificent reward at the hands of the divine bounty, the masses asked for but little in this world. The middle classes have striven with all their might to destroy that faith which alone assured them true repose. By their imagined wisdom they have imposed upon the ignorant, by their railleries they have intimidated human respect. They have made the people ashamed of that which was their only consolation. The sweetness of suffering is now regarded as an illusion of the past, but the determination to be happy is everything to man, and he will never renounce that. To close, then, in face of that determination the limitless expanse in which man's hope of the future mitigated the importunity of his desires, is but to intensify it by compression within the narrow limits which remain to him. The hope of man has been cast down from heaven to earth, like an eagle with a broken wing, which has no longer any power to fly, and can now only use its beak and its claws. Since the future has ceased to be, the present has become the great everything. Every moment of this short life robs a man for ever of the share which he has missed in each pleasure; he must therefore have all, and have it at once."[1] "Everything, says M. Tarde, "is easily explained by the ever-growing

[1] "Nos fausses républiques," *Correspondant*, 25th May, 1894.

luxury of our lives; a breath of corrupting lasciviousness has passed over our hearts."[1] The opportunists have denounced false gods, but now they wish to retain anarchical or socialistic Polyeuctes ever ready to destroy. "He that soweth iniquity shall reap evils," Solomon says in his Proverbs. In the Middle Ages people sought *non solum, sed cœlum*—"not earth, but heaven." Now the universal cry is *non cœlum, sed solum*—"not heaven, but earth." Besides, as there is no God, the wicked may say there is nothing to fear. "Formerly we had God," says the Marquis d'Auberine in "les Effrontés." Having now no prospect of anything beyond the grave, the wicked man mercilessly overthrows every obstacle in his way. "They have counted our life a pastime, and the business of life to be gain, and that we must be getting every way, even out of evil." —Wisdom xv. 12. And again—"All things are mingled together—blood, murder, theft and dissimulation, corruption and unfaithfulness, tumults and perjury, disquieting of the good, forgetfulness of God, defiling of souls, changing of nature, disorder in marriage, and the irregularity of adultery and uncleanness."—Wisdom xiv. 25, 26. Napoleon could not help exclaiming—"Without religion men will kill one another, either for an apple or for a pretty woman." Formerly, when about to commit an evil deed, men bethought themselves of the Decalogue, and hesitated. In getting rid of God, philosophers and learned men have snapped the last tie that held men fast to the old traditions of honesty and honour. Fear of the police may keep small criminals in order, but what influence can it have on those who hold in their hands the fate of the police and of the entire judicature? These, we know, may offend with impunity, for "the laws," says Montesquieu, "are like spiders' webs: small flies are caught in them, but large ones break through." Juvenal says—"Blame is tender to the ravens, but shows no mercy to doves."[2] Human justice will never be more than a bundle of expedients, a minimum of injustice. Facts therefore justify us in saying that, strictly speaking, morality without God means no morality at all. It has neither foundation nor coping-stone, neither root nor

[1] "La criminalité comparée," pp. 183, 184.
[2] "Dat veniam corvis; vexat censura columbas."

sanction. Having no dependence on any person or thing, it depends solely on caprice. We may take or leave what we like of it, according to our passions. It is the pride of our nature that our belief rules our actions. Be that true or false, it gives an impetus to the whole being. If we are guided by truth, it is an energising power for good; if we are led away by error, it ensures our downward career.

"Let us lay the foundations of our morality in God," said Robespierre; "no nation has ever yet ventured to socialise atheism." "Laws," said Portallis, "only control the arm; religion rules the heart."[1] "The State has no longer any religion," writes Musset, "and, whatever humanitarians may say, this is a real misfortune for France. All the taverns of Paris put together are not worth one village church; for there the ills of life are forgotten, and hope is received with the Host."[2] In a remarkable article on the present crisis of morality, Edmond Schérer wrote in 1884—"Let us learn to see things as they are; the true, the good, the ancient, the authoritative morality needs the Absolute, aspires to the transcendental, and finds its mainstay in God alone. Conscience, like the heart, demands a future. Duty is nothing if not sublime, and life would be a comedy but for its relation to eternity."[3]

There is, then, only one principle which can serve as the basis of our ideal of duty, and that is religion. If the moral law does not depend on an avenging God, man is as free as the zebra in the desert. No one would sacrifice himself for the sake of duty if duty were a human institution. He would merely make himself a dupe. "Men sacrifice their rest, their labour, and their life for duty, because they know it is a divine institution. The most irrefutable proof of the existence of God is the death of a just man."[4] I doubt not but that, as the world goes, a professor of wisdom, such as the ancient Epicurus, may be an honest man, and that he may lead a pure life, even while he holds the splendid edifice of the universe to be the

[1] "Discours sur l'organisation des cultes" (Séance du 5th April, 1802).
[2] "Lettres de Dupuy et Cotonet" (2e lettre).
[3] "Études sur la littérature contemporaine," t. VIII., pp. 182, 183.
[4] Jules Simon, "Le devoir," preface, p. iv.

result of a fortuitous agglomeration of senseless atoms. But to a soul in a healthy condition such a system of morality is monstrous. We can fancy a good English citizen paying his taxes regularly, faithfully accomplishing his daily task, fighting, if need be, for his country, and yet refusing to take off his hat to the Queen. We should not on that account stigmatise him as a traitor or a rebel; still, we should feel a certain pitying contempt for a man so crotchety and so deficient in manners.[1] Certainly there are to be found in France as well as in England men whom the abstract sense of duty suffices to keep in the right path, and whose honour and honesty are of as good metal as their understanding; but such men are rare, and their morality is but religion without its etiquette. Whatever good such a moral system may propose in the books that teach it is borrowed from the Decalogue, and, so far, it is a copy of the moral law of Christianity. Some people say that honour may be the ruling principle of life. But it seems to us that honour, apart from morality, is not worth much. "The whole forms but one chain, and honour hangs like a flower from the last link. If the chain breaks, the flower falls with the rest."[2] As interpreted by men, morality altogether wants that fixed basis which is its safeguard. To accept the moral law, then, is to confess that it can have come forth from the mind of God alone, that He only can give expression to it in us through the voice of conscience, and that it is subject to none but God. "Sublime law, promulgated from heaven, whose father is Olympus, whose origin is divine; law, not of to-day or of yesterday, to whose birth no man can assign a date, and which will never fall into oblivion; law, immutable and eternal, in which lives the mighty God, who never can grow old."[3]

Thus we see that the only efficacious system of morality is that in which God commands and conscience approves or condemns. Every detail of the moral law is given in Leviticus, chapter xix. Each verse ends with this magnificent attestation—"I am the Lord"—*Ego Dominus.*

[1] John Stuart Blackie, "The Education of One's Self," p. 67.
[2] Octave Feuillet, "Mme. de Camors à M. de Camors."
[3] Sophocles, "Oedipus Rex," 858, 859.

"The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel, and thou shalt say to them—Be ye holy, because I, the Lord your God, am holy. Let every one fear his father and mother. Keep my Sabbaths. I am the Lord your God. Turn not to idols, nor make to yourselves molten gods. I am the Lord your God. When thou reapest the corn of thy land, thou shalt not cut down all that is on the face of the earth to the very ground, nor shalt thou gather the ears that remain. Neither shalt thou gather the bunches of grapes that fall down in thy vineyard, but shall leave them to the poor and the strangers to take. I am the Lord your God. Thou shalt not swear falsely by My name, nor profane the name of thy God. I am the Lord. Thou shall not calumniate thy neighbour, nor oppress him by violence. The wages of him that hath been hired by thee shall not abide with thee till the morning. Thou shalt not speak evil of the deaf, nor put a stumbling-block before the blind; but thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, because I am the Lord. Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart, but reprove him openly, lest thou incur sin through him. Seek not revenge, nor be mindful of the injury of thy citizens. Thou shalt love thy friend as thyself. I am the Lord. Rise up before the hoary head, and honour the person of the aged man; and fear the Lord thy God. I am the Lord. Let the balance be just and the weights equal, the bushel just and the sextary equal. I am the Lord your God, that brought you out of the land of Egypt. Keep all My precepts, and my judgments, and do them. I am the Lord." This is explicit. We know what we have to do, whom we are to obey, and that He who commands has a right to command. "I am the Lord your God! I have a right to give you commandments. You have the obligation of observing them. One day I shall call you to account."

We have seen that duty postulates liberty; that liberty postulates God. It remains to show that God and liberty postulate immortality.

Pascal says—"The immortality of the soul is a truth of such importance to us, and touches us so nearly, that we must have lost every sense of feeling if we care not to know what it is. We already know what the belief that

the soul is immortal implies. The soul is immortal, not because it is something distinct from the body, but because God is just. Its being distinct from the body is a condition of its immortality, not a proof of it. Moreover, the proof of the immortality of the soul from its spiritual nature is not conclusive, for God can, by His Omnipotence, reduce to nothingness any creature that He has made.

If God can do this, will He do it in the case of the soul? To do so would be inconsistent with His justice. I have within me the idea of justice, and the consciousness of my responsibility. Reason would never consent to the good and the bad being treated alike. If God is just the future life is a certainty. The interior sanction is insufficient. M. Rénan himself writes—"Imagine a pure woman falsely accused, the innocent victim of an irreparable judicial blunder; a man dying in the accomplishment of an act of devotedness, and a wise ruler massacred by a savage soldiery. What should these do but lift up their eyes to heaven? Where, but on high, shall we expect to find a righteous witness"?[1] Social sanction is insufficient. There is no proportion in the world between virtue and earthly goods, or between vice and the ills of life. Spencer speaks, and with reason, of an absolute "amorality" in the distribution of the goods and ills of life. "One prays, and he dies of hunger," says St. Augustine; "another blasphemes, and he is satiated with good things."[2] Judicial sanction does not pay attention to virtue and does not reward it, nor can it punish every action contrary to the natural law. Besides, how many judicial mistakes are made? How often is justice withheld? Who shall judge the judges of the earth? "Crime sometimes meets with due chastisement, but it is often the highway to honour."[3] Shakespeare says, in "King Lear"—"Plate sins with gold, and the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks; arm it in rags, a pigmy straw doth pierce it."[4]

Socrates drinks hemlock; Thraseas bleeds himself to death; whilst Octavius hides his crimes beneath his purple,

[1] "Feuilles détachées," preface, p. 28.
[2] "Hic orat et esurit; ille blasphemat et eructat."
[3] "Ille crucem, pretium sceleris tulit; hic diadema."—JUVENAL.
[4] "King Lear," Act iv., Scene 6.

and dies in his bed exclaiming—"The farce is played out." Open the pages of history, and what scenes of iniquity present themselves! To what tribunal are all these crimes responsible? What matters it to their perpetrators how future posterity may judge of their actions? Have we not often asked of God, with David, why He forsook us, or why He slept? *Exsurge, Domine! quare obdormis?* "If I had no other proof," says Rousseau, "of the immortality of the soul than the triumph of the wicked and the oppression of the good in this world, this alone would prevent all doubt. Such shocking discord in the harmony of the universe would call for explanation. I should say to myself—'All does not end with this life; things will be set right after death.' Those metaphysicians who tell us that after death our essence exhales itself in nature are impostors, and they do not satisfy our cravings for revenge and for immortality."

Yes, the gravest argument for the future life is that drawn from the very heart of human misery. It obliged Providence to a to-morrow, as a tardy justification of its government. In view of the miseries and the unequal allotments of this life, we appeal to God: and, when our cry goes unanswered, when all appears to be disorder around us, there is only one possible conclusion, viz., that a time will come when full justice shall be rendered to every one; that death is not a final collapse, but that the soul is destined for another life, where satisfaction will be made alike to the divine justice and to human reason. "The Lord will judge both the just and the unjust, and the divine plan will be fully realised."[1] The wicked cannot hope for any solid or lasting good. The Scripture says again—"The hope of the wicked is as dust which is blown away with the wind, and as a thin froth which is dispersed by the storm, and a smoke that is scattered abroad by the wind, and as the remembrance of a guest of one day that passeth by."—Wisdom, v. 15. "If death," says Plato, "were the dissolution and the annihilation of the whole man, the wicked man would be too great a gainer, being delivered at the same time from his body, his soul, and his vices. But, since the

[1] "Justum et impium judicabit Deus; et tempus omnis rei tunc erit."

soul is immortal, it has no other means of escaping the evils which await the wicked than by learning wisdom and practising virtue."[1] "O inortal," he says in another place, "who darest to accuse the gods because they do not instantly punish crime, learn the reason why they delay punishment. If vengeance were immediate, men would honour the gods from fear rather than from piety. But, vengeance being delayed, men have time to produce both virtues and vices; and, if they finally resolve on crime, they pay the penalty of their iniquity. This is justice enough."[2] "Say not, I have sinned, and what harm hath befallen me? for the Most High is a patient rewarder."—Eccl. v. 4. "My witness," exclaims Job, "is in heaven, and He that knoweth my conscience is on high."—Job xvi. 20.

[1] "Les lois," Liv. X.
[2] *Ibid.*

CHAPTER V.

THE OPPONENTS OF THE SUPERNATURAL.

"Despise not that which is invisible."—Socrates to Euthydemus.

"But whether death itself is to suppress or to root out, with the consciousness of existence, all anxiety as to that which is beyond, is a point worthy of consideration."—St. Augustine, "Confessions," Book VI., Chap. ii.

"Truth, with its piercing light, must be sought for with the whole soul."—Plato, "The Republic," VIII.

No well-informed materialist of our day would admit that all that exists can be completely explained as the result of blind chance, or of the absence of intelligence. In the present state of science it is impossible to return to the atomic theories of Epicurus and Lucretius. The laws which govern both the world of matter and the world of life are mathematically fixed, and on this point spiritualists and materialists agree.

The divergence between them begins when materialists attribute intelligence to unconscious matter. In the laws which govern nature they profess to find a full and sufficient explanation of all things. According to them, nature gains her ends in a purely mechanical and unconscious fashion. On the other hand, the spiritualists, seeing no trace of intelligence inherent in nature, and knowing besides, by psychological experience, that where there is intelligence there must be consciousness, declare that intelligence and consciousness are inseparable, and that the intelligence which created nature is therefore something distinct from nature. The God of whom we have spoken is the living God of the Christians. Opposed to this God are many fashionable idols. Philosophers have themselves created these idols before adoring them, and they give to them the name of God. Let this fact be understood.

The great name of God is found by men to be so imposing, that those who deny the presence of the Divine in humanity are obliged to accept and employ this name even whilst rejecting the reality. There are few who dare to decide the question after the manner of Spinoza, when, according to Voltaire, he dared to address God in these words—"Between ourselves, I do not believe that you exist!" In order to be understood by the unlearned, the boldest among them consider it necessary to make use of this name, in season and out of season, but they wish to give to it "a more and more attenuated meaning." Hence their systems of philosophy resolve themselves into subtleties too fine to be grasped. We shall see that all their conceptions of the problem of the existence of things, outside spiritual philosophy, are mere words and formulæ. *Numina, nomina*, said one of the ancients. The saying applies literally to the systems invented by the opponents of the supernatural. These opponents have various conceptions of God. But, sacrificing one attribute after another, they allow the whole Divine Essence to disappear. The idea of the Divinity has been corrupted and mutilated by them in a thousand different ways. They set foot on this sacred soil only to strew it with ruins, by demolishing what still remained of the ancient edifice of truth. Their gods are so many idols hewn from one block.

In reality there are but two contending systems—the spiritualistic and the material; or, in other words, eternal matter *versus* eternal intelligence, as the final cause of things. There are both philosophers who believe and philosophers who disbelieve. The latter are sceptics, or positivists, or pantheists, or materialists. All these opponents of spiritualism either declare that there is no Divine personal intelligence, or that they have no knowledge of its existence. It is useful to discuss their systems, and to show that they have no logical foundation; above all, that they offer no satisfaction to the aspirations or even to the most legitimate needs of man. "When we attend the school of the philosophers, we must not forget to take with us the old light of common sense, and to use it in order to judge of the new light which they offer to us."[1]

[1] Th. Reid, III., p. 29.

I.

Let us first speak of scepticism, or agnosticism. To be accurate, scepticism is not a system. The sceptic is neither for nor against God. Since, as regards God, he has reasons both for belief and for doubt, these reasons are equally balanced in his mind and he thus concludes—"I cannot express an opinion, for I know nothing about it." Scepticism is, therefore, a state of mind. It is met with amongst good people who are not systematic, and who have not studied philosophical systems. According to their experience and reasoning, they admit the force of arguments on the side of God's existence, and also on the side of His non-existence, and hence they remain undecided. The same state of mind is found amongst professional philosophers, and also amongst cultivated men, the only class of persons who can realise the difficulties of subjective idealism. Such is the philosophy of some contemporary writers. Thus, one of the greatest of poets, Alfred de Vigny, was a sceptic. He did not deny the existence of God, but knew nothing about Him. He, who at last died like a Christian, wrote in "Eloa"—"If Heaven leaves us as though the world were an abortion, the just man will correspond to its absence by disdain. He will reply by cold imperious silence, to the eternal silence of the Deity!" M. Sully-Prudhomme is also a sceptic. His inclinations would lead him to believe in God. Reflection causes him to hesitate—"When I hear men dispute about God, whom they know not, I ask myself—Where are we? Alas! always at the same point."[1]

Rénan was a great sceptic.[2] He advocated no system. His conception of God passed through a number of phases. He was at one time an Hegelian, at another a pantheist, and at a third a positivist. As a rule, he denied the existence of God, but one may say of his atheism what he said of Feuerbacher's—"He is devoutly atheistic, even with a sort of unction." Sometimes he appeared to believe

[1] "La Poésie" (Stanzas and Poems). To understand the scepticism of Sully-Prudhomme, one must read his last work, "Que sais-je?"

[2] To see in M. Rénan merely the adversary of the Christ of history is to ignore his genuine and clearly expressed opinions. He was an Agnostic, not a Deist.

in God. God to him was sometimes—"The category of the ideal," or the "sum-total of our ideas"; or again, "the eternal future." "Providence is the sum-total of all fundamental conditions which govern the march of the universe; it is an equipoise, a resultant." It seems as if to him nature were an absolutely immoral spectacle, which, far from revealing God to us, induces the belief that He does not exist. M. Rénan did not believe in the rationalistic proofs of God's existence. He wished God to show Himself. "When this Being has revealed Himself scientifically then I will believe in Him!" he says. At that rate no one would doubt. The truth is that God does not desire to force our assent, all moral life being dependent on belief in Him. It is therefore not surprising that M. Rénan should have imagined God as a mere formula, or as the law governing all things. To him God is the most general idea that we perceive in the beings surrounding us. In attributing to the Infinite the limits of these qualities, we may succeed in conjuring up before ourselves the idea of a being whose perfections are limitless. It is the absolute, the infinite, the ideal, or the category of the ideal. But all these conceptions of God are purely imaginary and correspond to nothing real. Later on M. Rénan conceived the idea of God as a final result and not as a first cause; of the world as full of Him, not by what it receives but by what it offers. The universe raises itself towards this Being and realises Him by this effort. Eternal change, and not eternal immobility, is what renders God possible. It is God *in fieri*—God makes Himself! Diderot had already written—"God will perhaps create Himself some day!" What is to be thought of this God who, according to a happy definition, "creates Himself without existing, learns to know Himself leisurely, and ends in course of time by acquiring a Name." Is not such a God sufficiently absurd? Lastly M. Rénan showed that he had something of the mystic in him. In his *Examen de conscience philosophique*, one of his latest productions, he says—"The existence of God is not an impossibility." Hitherto he had never made this acknowledgment. This ideal inspires him with certain effusions as if he were speaking of a real being.

"Heavenly Father, Thou hast ordained that in the moral order the truth should be known to simple, rather than to sophisticated hearts. Blessed be Thou for having hidden Thyself, thus guarding the full and complete liberty of our hearts."[1] Would not one suppose from this that M. Rénan really believed in God? Perhaps he revealed his real thought when he wrote that "Humanity by its heart has created God. If humanity consisted solely of intellect it would be atheistical."[2] Here M. Rénan agreed with Göethe, who in "Faust" says—"What reasonable being could say, 'There is a God?' and what sentient being that 'There is not one'"? These words are perhaps the fairest expression of M. Rénan's thoughts regarding God.[3]

What answer can be given to the Agnostic? To pretend that on such a question as that of the existence of God the human mind can neither affirm nor deny, is to imagine a state of mind repugnant to right reason. It is impossible that on so fundamental a question the mind can say neither "Yes," nor "No." If you dare not affirm that God exists why not declare, with the materialists, that in reality He is nothing more than blind Nature? Does such a statement repel you? Then assert its opposite boldly. If we confined ourselves to the statement that the idea of God is incomprehensible to us we should be perfectly right; that is precisely why we acknowledge that He exists. If we cannot affirm His existence, what does He represent? An hypothesis, an idea, but without any foundation. Agnosticism here is only timid atheism. Has man a right to pretend that a proof is not certain because it presents difficulties? In the presence of a certain and sufficient proof, the intelligence admits the conclusion which results from this proof, even though it presents some apparently

[1] "Études religieuses."

[2] "Avenir de la métaphysique," p. 49.

[3] M. Rénan in his variations on the idea of God resembles the wood-cutter, spoken of by Isaias, who has cut down a tree. He disposes of the green leaves and sells the branches. He takes some to the baker to cook his bread with. He carves what remains, fashions it, gives it a face, and kneels down before it. He ends by making his God and adoring it. We can also say of M. Rénan what Tacitus says of Tiberius, "*Ut callidum ingenium, ita anvium judicium*—The keenness of his mind impairs the stability of his judgment."

insoluble difficulties. Otherwise it would become impossible to believe in anything whatever. An intelligent man who knows the objections urged by reason against the ideas of movement, time, and space, if he is consistent, if he wishes to have all his difficulties explained away, will at length be unable to believe in either movement, or time, or space. He will end by doubting even the very existence of the exterior world, even the existence of his own personality, for very many strong objections may be urged against these realities. Nevertheless, sound sense and the laws of nature will always prevent doubt on these subjects. Now, man ought not to have two ways of acting. He ought to consider religious truth in the same manner as he does truth taught by experience. "When once a truth is reasonably enunciated," says M. Fonsegrive, "it ought not to be doubted, and if there is some difficulty in reconciling it with another accepted truth, instead of hastening to reject it, both should be retained to allow time, and the progress of science, to bring about the desired harmony. For the postulate of all science is that 'truth agrees with itself.'"[1]

II.

What is Positivism? Positivism is not a metaphysical doctrine seeking to explain God. It is rather a systematic abstinence from the consideration of the problem. In the eyes of positivists, metaphysical problems cannot be solved. As early as the 18th century they were so regarded. In England the phenomenal system of Hume, feebly contradicted by Reid and Stewart, was the formal negation of all metaphysics. In Germany Kant arrived at the same conclusions by means of criticism. What to these foreign

[1] "Éléments de philosophie," Book II., p. 73.

It cannot be too frequently impressed upon the mind that truth is essentially one, and that all truth, scientific, religious, moral, social, or whatever it may be, originates from one and the same source, and cannot, therefore, be in conflict with itself. Any conflict which may seem to exist between truth in one order and truth in another, shows that either the truth has been imperfectly perceived, or that falsehood has been mistaken for truth. Christianity can never come into collision with scientific truth. Both are alike divine. Hence Christianity fears no scientific discovery or proof, for she regards Natural Science as the handmaid and ally of Religious Science. It is only when hypothesis is substituted for proof that religion protests.

philosophers was a serious system was expressed by Voltaire in a witty phrase more within the comprehension of the multitude—"When two persons talk of things on which they cannot agree, they are talking metaphysics; and when neither of them understands his own meaning, they are talking deep metaphysics." M. Comte, the founder of the positivists, summed up his doctrine in these words—"Positive philosophy does not concern itself with beginnings, nor does it ask if the universe had a beginning, nor what happens to living beings, plants, animals, or men after their death, or at the end of time, if there is an end of time."[1] The positivists, with M. Littré at their head, say—"Does God exist? We know nothing about that. Those who think that positive philosophy denies or affirms anything whatever on this subject are wrong. It denies nothing. It affirms nothing. To deny or to affirm would be to declare one's self to have some knowledge of the origin of beings and of their end. What is actually established is that the two ends of things are inaccessible to us, and that only the middle condition, which in the terminology of the schools is styled 'the relative,' belongs to us."[2] "I am resolved," says M. Littré, "to confine myself to the relative." Hence he dismisses both spiritual and material philosophy from his consideration. "An atheist," he says, "is a dogmatiser the other way about." "We are positive," preach these philosophers; "we are satisfied with examining facts which pass before our eyes; we label and classify them; we do not go further. The beyond, if there is one, does not belong to us. It does not concern us, since it cannot be seen by our eyes or touched with our hands." M. Littré compares this "Beyond" to "an ocean for which we have neither bark nor sail, the clear vision of which is as salutary as it is formidable." Thus M. Littré thinks that "there may be something mysterious beyond what we know." But is this something a god? Or is it fate? Or is it the eternal Atom? M. Littré will not even seek for it. He says—"That would be to persevere in a labour which is beyond humanity, since the greatest geniuses have not been able to formulate any really exact demonstration of

[1] "Paroles de philosophie positive," p. 34.
[2] Littré, *ibid.*, p. 52.

God."[1] We see here a difference between the agnostic and the positivist. The positivist does not say of metaphysical truths that he does not know them, but that they cannot be known. On this point he dogmatises, and even M. Littré did not leave the question open. Stuart Mill, having made certain concessions, was sharply recalled by M. Littré to positivist orthodoxy. The English philosopher had stated that those who accept the theory of successive stages of opinion are not obliged to follow M. Comte to the end; that the positive mode of thought is not necessarily a negation of the supernatural; that the positive philosopher is free to form what seems to him the most probable opinion on this subject. "The positivist philosopher," replies Littré, "must not be supposed to allow freedom of thought as to primary causes while treating of secondary causes." No, he allows no liberty on this point. His conclusion is precise and categorical. He declares first causes to be unknown. Let us mark this well. "Absence of affirmation and absence of negation are inseparable."[2] The positivist maintains that man should only occupy himself with what can be or has been already verified. We may remind these philosophers of the words of Scripture:—*Oculos suos statuerunt declinare in terram*—"They have set their eyes bowing down to the earth" (Ps. xvi. 11). Oh! these souls, bent towards earth and without an ideal! *O curvæ in terras animæ et cœlestium inanes!* says Perseus, in a line which is almost Christian. And does not Joubert also speak of minds that "have no windows open towards heaven"?

The great reason advanced by positivists for rejecting all speculation concerning God is that speculations of this sort, in spite of all reflection, "are powerless to convince all men." It is thus chimerical to hope to arrive at effective proofs, since for thousands of years the finest minds have been unable to discover such proofs. Doubtless the proofs of spiritual philosophy do not convince all minds, since some doubt and others deny their force, but they are, nevertheless, rationally conclusive. Only, as demonstrated truth is

[1] "Paroles de philosophie positive."
[2] *Ibid.*

inaccessible to the senses and surrounded by difficulties, it is but natural that there should be minds which do not content themselves with what is clear in the demonstration, and take advantage of what is obscure to dispute the solidity of what is clear. Besides, if the proofs of the existence of God were as weak as many opponents pretend, if they were really powerless to convince, there would be no positivism. The true system would be atheism. It appears to the positivist that the proofs of the existence of God are not conclusive, but he also feels that they have real force. Otherwise he would be resolutely atheistical. Positivism, then, is only a compromise.

Let us hasten to say that there are few positivists who remain firm in their neutrality. Auguste Comte, the father of the system, a man of mathematical mind, formally contradicted himself. On the one hand he denied God's existence, on the other he gave himself up to mystical outpourings. It is known that he organised what is called "The Religion of Humanity." He desired to satisfy the religious needs of man by making of humanity the great being who ought to be honoured, and who fills the ages with his life and activity. Comte even composed a calendar with real festivals,[1] and recommended to his disciples the perusal of the "Imitation of Jesus Christ," stipulating merely that the names of God and Christ should be

[1] Its title is "The Positivist Calendar, adapted to all years equally; or, concrete view of the preparatory period of man's history, especially intended for the final period of transition through which the Western Republic has to pass; the Republic which, since Charlemagne, has been formed by the free cohesion of the five leading populations—the French, Italian, Spanish, British, and German." The year is divided into thirteen lunar months, dedicated respectively to Moses, Homer, Aristotle, Archimedes, Cæsar, St. Paul, Charlemagne, Dante, Gütenberg, Shakespeare, Descartes, Frederick II., and Bichat. The names of Buddha, Confucius, and Mahomet occur, with those of numerous Catholic saints, pagan philosophers, poets, scientists, warriors, kings, dramatists, politicians, diplomatists, popes, mystics, musicians, etc., etc. The name of Jesus, however, does not appear among the benefactors of the human race, though in the Positivist lecture-rooms a picture or statue of the Madonna and Child usually occupies a prominent position as a representation of humanity, which "definitively substitutes herself for God, without ever forgetting His provisional services"! See "The Catechism of the Positive Religion," translated by Mr. Richard Congreve, an ex-Anglican clergyman, now one of the high priests of English Positivism.

replaced by that of humanity.[1] This folly would be incredible were it not absolutely historical, and it clearly shows that the religious sentiment is natural to man. Undoubtedly most positivists incline towards materialism, and are indeed materialists at heart, but few among them will deny the desire for "the Beyond." In spite of human experience, however wide we may suppose its extent to be, there exists an abyss, a certain "I know not what"—darkness or light, in the future.

M. Littré himself seems at times to feel the attraction of the invisible regions. "What is beyond facts and laws," he says, "whether in the material order, unbounded space, or in the intellectual order, the inter-connection of causes without limits is absolutely inaccessible to the human mind, but inaccessible does not mean non-existent. Immensity, whether material or intellectual, is linked by a firm bond to our knowledge, and becomes by virtue of this alliance a positive idea, and of the same order. I mean that in touching and assigning limits to it, immensity appears in its double character, both real and inaccessible. It is an ocean that beats upon our shore, for which we have neither bark nor sail, but the clear vision of which is as salutary as it is formidable."[2] And again—"The sentiment of nature has never been absent from the human soul, whether as mother or as step-mother, its gifts and its inclemencies, its beauties and its horrors, will for ever occupy the thoughts of humanity."[3]

That obstinate positivist, Stuart Mill, the resolute foe of all idea of cause, also had this vision. If he does not dare to affirm the Infinite, which transcends all limits, he admits at least that it is possible. "An immense darkness, empty

[1] In his preface to the "Catechism of the Positive Religion," p. 26, Comte says—"I add . . . an improved edition of the short catalogue which I published 8th October, 1851, with the view of guiding more thoughtful minds in their choice of books for constant use. It is a service which . . . could only originate with the Positive priesthood (*sic !*), by virtue of its encyclopædic character, thus brought into distinct light." Among the books enumerated are the following:—The Bible; St. Augustine's "De Civitate Dei" and "Confessions"; the "Imitation"; Bossuet's "Exposition de la Catholique" and "Variations of Protestantism"; De Maistre's "Du Pape," etc. Towards the close of his strange "Catechism," Comte says—"Catholicism, which once had my belief, must always have my reverence" (p. 273).

[2] "Auguste Comte et la philosophie positive" (p. 505).

[3] "Études sur les Barbares et le moyen âge" (p. 158).

or full, which surrounds the narrow circle in which our little lamp flickers, this is the impression left by the spectacle of things on the mind of sceptics as well as on the faithful."[1] He perceives glimpses of fissures in this wall which shuts us in, fissures through which passes a ray of the light that shines in the unknown beyond. He even declares that he does not forbid a thinker to believe in God, that there are probabilities on the side of His existence, and that he does not hesitate to recognise in the universe certain traces of a superior wisdom. We see that he is very straightforward. But he finds so much evil in the world that it is difficult to admit that God is all-powerful or all-good. If there is a God, why is there so much disorder and evil here below? This system, if I may presume to say so, appears to me a sort of undogmatic Manicheism. Towards the end of his life Mill was drawn by an ever-increasing, almost passionate aspiration towards the divine. He speaks in the "History of my Life and Thought" of the "withering effects due to the dry education" he had received. Above all, the last of his "Essays on Religion," published shortly before his death, should be read. In it he accepts for the first time, along with the principle of finality, a sort of creative power, limited by rival powers, the influence of which alone explains the great anomalies of nature. Here he also admits that "the soul may exist," and that "hope of its immortality may be entertained."

To Herbert Spencer, the greatest of agnostics,[2] God is the "Unknowable," which is almost the same as the "unnameable Father" of the Gnostics; the great X is the supreme explanation. Thanks to his theory of the Unknowable, Spencer finds an opening in the thick wall of the sensualistic system. He admits that the relative implies the absolute. The absolute is not beyond the knowledge of man as absolute and as implied by the relative.[3] Beyond accessible things there is an infinite region. The human mind must conceive a sort of absolute to which all that is relative refers. The firm idea of Spencer is that the absolute is

[1] "Logic."

[2] Positivism is agnosticism under another name.

[3] Hamilton, some time before Spencer, denied that the absolute is an essential notion of the human mind.

present to the mind as something that exists, but what is this something? Is it an idea? Is it a reality? It is impossible to know. All philosophers, all theologians, have tried to determine it. Nothing they have said absolutely commands belief. Agnosticism thus goes a step farther than positivism. The absolute is one of the essential notions of the human brain. There is something absolute in a being or a series of beings; but this something absolute cannot be known. It is the *Nescio quid inconcussum.*[1] However that may be, Spencer at this point is unfaithful to his doctrine. When we deny that we have the power to know the essence of the absolute, we tacitly admit its existence; and this fact alone proves that the absolute has been present to the mind, not as nothing, but as something. In the impossibility of conceiving the relative except in relation to a real absolute, we seem to hear an echo of the infinite, which opposes the finite as the supreme supporter of existence. This return to metaphysics is inevitable, directly (at the last limits of positive knowledge), the existence of the mysterious "Beyond" is granted. It is useless to pronounce this principle to be at once real and inaccessible. From the moment it is pronounced real it is shown to be in some degree known, and, once known, thought cannot be prevented from being drawn towards it. The human mind is of such a nature that it cannot be hindered from dogmatising on the essence of things. It is, in fact, very difficult to remain in this chimerical region, and the positivist mind always more or less goes beyond the limits of its own system.

Such is positive and agnostic philosophy—the most radical negation of the supernatural order—a philosophy which, from a practical point of view, leads us on to absolute atheism. If we do not know what God is, clearly we shall neither concern ourselves about Him nor pray to Him. With the holders of such a doctrine, which regards as imaginary all realities beyond the region of the senses, discussion on the platform of philosophy and religion is impossible. There is nothing in this system which can give light to the reason of the student, which can offer help to his heart, or an ideal to his soul, or a guide to his life.

[1] "First Principles," Chap. iv., p. 93.

And, first of all, that idea of the infinite which is innate in us destroys the very groundwork of positivism. It leads us to complain of the boundaries that limit finite things. No immensity is wide enough for the span of our wings. All men, like Musset, feel the need of exclaiming—"In spite of myself the Infinite torments me! I cannot think of it without fear, nor yet without hope. And, whatever has been said, my reason is alarmed at failing to understand it while yet seeing it. What then is this world, and for what purpose are we here? If to live is peace, one must veil the skies, pass like sheep with eyes bent on the ground, and deny the rest. Is this to be happy? No, it is ceasing to be a man, and it degrades the soul!"[1]

We carry this conception of the infinite within ourselves, and it crushes us. What is there beyond yon starry vault? We answer—"Fresh starry skies." Granted, and what beyond them? The human mind, urged by an invisible force, will never cease to ask this question—"What is there beyond?" Will it pause in time or in space? The point at which it stops is but one greatness attained, only greater than all that went before. Hardly is it reached when the unappeasable question recurs, and this cry of insatiable curiosity cannot be silenced. It is of no use to answer—"Beyond are unlimited distances, times, and magnitudes." No one understands these words. He who proclaims the existence of the infinite—and none can escape doing so—accumulates in this assertion more of the supernatural than is to be found in all the miracles of all religions; for the idea of the infinite has a double character. It commands belief, and yet it is incomprehensible. When this notion takes possession of the understanding, one can but bow down before it. "Looking as I do upon the words 'progress' and 'invention' as synonymous I ask myself, in the name of what discovery, philosophical or scientific, can the human soul be detached from these high preoccupations? Their essence appears to me eternal, because the mystery which surrounds the universe, and from which they emanate, is itself in its very nature eternal."[2] We are, in truth, greater than time or space; we imagine something

[1] "Espoir en Dieu."
[2] Pasteur, "Discours de réception à l'Académie française."

which has not begun, which cannot end, which has no limits, and which is indestructible; and we cannot help imagining it. We go beyond all real distances. We imagine others as possible; and beyond all that are possible we yet conceive others without any limit. We look around us, and we say—"Behind this mountain there is another mountain; behind this sea another sea; behind this earth another earth; behind this planetary system other planetary systems; behind them others again! Science tells me so. Beyond them all what is there? I cannot imagine that beyond there is nothing—mere emptiness. I cannot entertain such a thought. I am compelled to imagine beyond the farthest greatness a greatness without limit. I thus reach, necessarily, the idea of the infinite. The limits of the universe recede in space as in time, and fall, so to say, before my eyes, to let me perceive in all directions and from all points of view the vastness of infinity. The mind of man, with its powerful wings, rises into these sublime and serene regions, and does not fear those distant paths. This idea, which to M. Pasteur is a decisive proof of the existence of God, is bewildering to the mind of man, and overwhelms it. The thought is expressed by M. Sully-Prudhomme in these fine lines—"You wish to fly whither your dreams ascend. To seize by force the jealous infinite. And you feel yourself when you try to rise chained to earth by fetters invisible."[1]

Religious fact, also, is a very strong proof against positive philosophy. If there is in the history of humanity a constant universal fact, it is that of religion. To take no account of this fact, or to pretend that it is a pure accident of the evolution of humanity, is contrary to all rules of experimental science. In the presence of spiritual philosophy and Christianity positivism can only be hypothesis. It cannot be sure of itself until it has destroyed Christian certainty. Far from having destroyed the proofs of spirituality, it has not even weakened them. If the system were a true one, man would be an absolutely contradictory being, in the sense that he is irresistibly drawn to endeavour to fathom the mysteries of the origin and the end of things, and yet knows that this need of his soul can never be satisfied. There are no other creatures who have necessary,

[1] "Stances et poèmes, A un désespéré."

natural, and yet unsatisfied cravings. All true philosophy is in favour of this instinctive protestation of the soul as to its own survival and eternal duration. It is a need which must be satisfied, like hunger and thirst. We propose these problems to ourselves from a necessity of our nature. Is there, then, another necessity of our nature which renders us incapable of solving them? Is it probable that we are created to seek eternally to discover what we shall never know?

We are aware that positivists explain the religious fact in their own way. We know the theory of Auguste Comte and his disciples on what they call "the development of the religious idea in humanity." Man is to be viewed at his first laborious bursting forth from the bounds of brute life, from the dominion of animalism. At first he is found prostrate before his fetish; later on he rises to a more enlightened domestic or patriotic polytheism, sometimes imposing and splendid, as in Greece and Rome. He rises still further, and reaches the heights of Christian Monotheism. Here by virtue of its relative elevation and purity the religious idea undergoes a radical transformation. From being theological it becomes philosophical, it reigns over the world of thought until, becoming powerless, metaphysics unite with religion. This is the point which we have now reached. Such is the actual state of the human mind when the question of origin and destiny are recognised to be what they really are—insoluble.

Positivism, which in theory condemns hypothesis, in practice uses it frequently; that is the fault we find it committing here. It pretends to rely on facts, even when they are against it. Far from following a necessarily upward path, the manifestations of the religious sentiment seem often to obey a law of decadence. According to the most positive testimony of contemporary science, the earliest form of the great oriental religions was far higher and purer than those which have succeeded it. How can we explain that brilliant exception, the monotheism of Israel; an exception which contradicts the theory of the natural development of humanity, and which stands out in history as a true miracle of the moral order? Positivists tell us that to-day religion is retiring from the world's stage. On

the contrary, not content with defending itself against all attacks, its success is attaining ever greater proportions. At the beginning of this century all religious societies appeared to revive as if with fresh inspiration. And now the struggle grows more and more vigorous between belief and negation. Is not the complicated inextricable knot of all current political questions the very religion which we are told "is at its last gasp"? Positivists err in disregarding facts. They have not understood that were religion eliminated by order of science it would find a certain refuge in human nature; that what differentiates men and animals is our ardent and persistent interest in that which lies beyond the tomb. The animal, "our lower brother," as S. Francis of Assisi calls him, also comes in contact with the problem of existence. He knows labour and suffering, and he encounters death. But what placidity there is in the creature who, obeying his magnificent instincts, observes faithfully all the laws which we violate! What separates us from him is that on coming into the world, and feeling ourselves condemned to death, we want death to restore to us under another form the life it takes from us; and, willingly or unwillingly, if we have not done violence to the human nature within us, we come back to this eternal problem. "What a miracle is the simple astonishment of the most uncertain thought before the mystery of fate!"[1] "The weakness of our brain required the teaching of material philosophy,"[2] wrote M. Pelletan. However sombre and narrow may be the inner valley of the human conscience, there always remains, as the prophet says, "a door of hope." "I will give him a door of hope in the valley of Acor." A powerful charm, a fascination which is sometimes sweet and sometimes terrible, lead the thinker and the scholar and the poet eternally back to supernatural questions.

Besides, reason has never rested in that ideal mean of absolute neutrality to which positivism invites us. To reason is for a man to discover ideas in himself. Natural metaphysics exist, which, from the beginning of time, have been accepted by humanity. By instinct reason dwells on

[1] Paul Bourget, "Outre-mer," vol. ii., p. 8.
[2] "La Nouvelle Babylone," p. 242.

the origin of man, on the nature of things, on causes and on substances; questions to which everywhere and always it gives the same replies. Instinctively it yields to the attraction of great problems, which become the more irritating when they are forbidden. You tell us that "a boundless Unknown surrounds us," and you insist that no attempt shall be made to fathom it. Reason cannot, however, be condemned to live always in the relative without one glance towards that absolute which it divines behind the veil of phenomena. The metaphysical instinct is innate in man. "Nature is a great piece of magic," said Buddha. Every one asks himself, "What is the reality beneath these appearances, which reveals and betrays itself at one and the same time?" It is surely high treason against human nature to endeavour to suppress in man the metaphysical instinct. If man arrives at a conclusion, at a probability, at an absolute "I know not," his reasoning on origins and destinies is not the less characteristic of his greatness. Always and everywhere, in spite of itself, reason has yielded to the attraction of great problems, and has tried to solve them in one way or another. Almost all, without wishing to do so, recognise that beyond what is accessible to science lies the eternal mystery as far as ever from being penetrated, only changing its name in passing from one to another, as "The Unknowable," "Force," "Cause," "Substance," "Will," or "The Absolute." Too often, while really partisans, disputants believe themselves to be neutral. They are surprised in the very act of denouncing both the system which holds them captive, and the secret resolve which impels them. Doubt, or voluntary suspension of judgment, in this class of problems, is never wholly pure indifference; it always appears to be nearer to negation than to affirmation. When we find M. Littré honouring pamphlets against spiritual philosophy with a preface,[1] can we consider it a sign of his neutrality? "Let it be thoroughly understood," wrote M. Lefevre in the *Pensée nouvelle*, "that if the good services of Positivism cause us to shut our eyes to its weaknesses, we are far from being the dupes of its reticence. The positivist school is a sect which originates in materialism, it has no value or

[1] "Matérialisme et spiritualisme," by M. Leblais.

meaning without the help of materialism."[1] Such is the opinion of one who is himself quite an adept in materialism.

The spiritualistic philosopher knows well this "Unknown" which vanishes beneath the alembics, and hides itself beyond the reach of telescopes, and this "X" that no experimental research can extract from the human body, and he calls them "God," and the "Soul." Discussing these questions, and seeking the solution of these problems, is not mere dreaming. "Metaphysics," says M. Vacherot, "are neither science nor dreams, but the high thoughts which enlighten science and dispel all dreams. Shakespeare, the actor, playwright, and man of the people, wrote this profound sentence:—"There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy," and there are still more things than are dreamt of in biology and physiology. "Positivism," says M. Georges Duruy, "suits narrow minds. Let a man be a materialist, or an atheist. There is something bold in these systems, a sort of gloomy poetry, an act of faith of the mind in something of which it is ignorant, an effort to shake off the weight of the unknowable which oppresses it. But a positivist! I detest this pedantic and selfish doctrine."[2]

Again, we know that in identical conditions all phenomena remain identical. Suppress this principle and there can be no experimental science. But what has given us this principle? Observation or experience? Assuredly not. It cannot be a result of observation or experience, since without it we should not have been able to observe or to make experiments. It is not a law, since without it we should not know that laws exist. It is, then, anterior to experience. Our minds can furnish judgments which do not proceed from experience, *i.e.*, *a priori* judgments. If there are in us ideas not dictated by the senses, what may we conclude? That the experimental method is not the only method for the discovery of truth. We can, then, examine ourselves and seek within us the foundation of a science which is not that of the tangible world, nor of exterior phenomena, but the science of the "Ego," the science of man.

[1] Art., "Réticences positivistes."
[2] "L'unisson."

Again, there is in man an ineradicable need which expresses itself by adoration, *i.e.*, admiration and veneration for an unknown object, but one that is foreseen as superior and necessary. He desires to salute this loved object with his lips, or rather with his heart, as the devout pagan used to kiss the images of his gods. Humanity has always worshipped, and rather than worship nothing it has bowed down to wood and stone. Have we not experienced when visiting some Alpine height, or solitary seashore, a feeling of inexplicable emotion? These ethereal lights, this breath from the desert mountain heights, or the infinite watery plains of the ocean, move us and raise us above ourselves. We allow ourselves to dream of peace, of purity, of spiritual splendour, which are as the mantle of Him who is called Light. Willingly would we have bent the knee and cried, "Oh, Eternal One, how magnificent are Thy heavens, how deep Thy thoughts!" Have we not, when our mind has recalled critical times in the world's history, felt the powerlessness and the insignificance of man, and recognised that he is often led whither he would not? And then we have repeated these words in which adoration of God is mingled with pity for man—"What is man that Thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that Thou visitest him?"—Ps. viii. 5. Have we not, after committing a fault, seen, as it were, an eye regarding us, and heard a grave and powerful voice coming from on high and touching our conscience? And then with a feeling of fear mingled with some remains of confidence, have we not felt the need of saying to this supreme Judge, "Who am I to appear before Thee?" When a father and mother lean over the cradle of their child, do they not feel with how persuasive a force this frail little creature silently speaks to them of God, and draws from their hearts those words of a mother in Israel—"The Eternal giveth life, and the Eternal taketh it away"? And you who have given a last kiss to the corpse of your beloved, and closed the eyes so dear to you, tell me, has not this mystery of a life that ends and of a life that begins at the same supreme moment, placed you face to face with a Being who is all-powerful, and to be both dreaded and implored? These are moments when religious emotion has seized hold of you, and when

the Infinite has come near to you, by a mute inspiration, a cry of nature, in creatures who divine their Creator by a primitive sentiment which they cannot repress!

Saint Augustine clearly shows that by instinct man cannot reconcile himself to systematic carelessness touching questions which every human soul necessarily asks itself. "Let all things perish!" he says in his "Confessions." "Let us say farewell to these vanities and frivolities! Let us consecrate our whole lives to the search for truth. This life is full of troubles. The day of death is uncertain. If it came to us suddenly, how should we leave this world? Where should we have to learn what we have neglected to learn here below? Should we not have rather to suffer the punishment that such negligence deserves? But is death to suppress and root up, along with the consciousness of existence, all anxiety respecting that which is beyond? That is a point to be examined! But God forbid that this should be so. No! it is not in vain that the authority of the Christian faith which dominates the opinions of men from so great a height is spread throughout the Universe. No! God would never work such wonders for us if the death of the body involved also the death of the soul." [1]

I say nothing of the kind of society which would originate from positivist doctrine were it taught to and practised by all men. Nothing would be narrower from the intellectual, and nothing more dangerous from the moral standpoint. Poetry, the fine arts, history, science itself, with its grand theories, when taken in its truer sense, and even healthy romance, would all become mere nonsense. In such a society there would be nothing but workshops for artisans, and prisons for dangerous persons; there would be no other code than that of Debit and Credit. There would be simply intellectual and moral Anarchy. After the recent Anarchist attempts, M. Zola made this candid confession—"I who have fought for positivism, do, I confess it after thirty years of struggle, feel my convictions shaken. Religious faith would have prevented the propagation of such principles. But has it not almost disappeared? Who will give us a new ideal?" [2]

[1] Book VI., Chap. xi.
[2] *Débats*, 20th December, 1893.

III.

We must now treat of pantheism.

According to this doctrine God and the world are not two distinct substances, as the former is only the principle inherent in all that constitutes being, force, and life in the latter.

This system assumes two characters—naturalistic pantheism or monism, as it is now called, and idealistic pantheism. In the former the foundation of things is considered to be material. In the latter their basis is said to be spirit, the rest being composed of the phenomena of this spirit. The spirit of the pantheists differs from that of spiritualistic philosophers, it is an unconscious tendency towards good. In this system the material or spiritual substance is confounded with the divine substance. "A spirit animates the matter, and is mingled with the entire mass."[1] God both vegetates in the plants and shines in the stars. All nature is an emanation, and, as it were, an efflorescence of the divine substance. God exists in the whole; he is not far from each of us; we are a part of him. Moreover, this god is not new to man. All who have suppressed other gods have thought of him. Pious pagans, who worshipped Jupiter and Juno, Venus, Mars, and Hercules, did really worship Humanity under mythical names and divine attributes.

Pantheism has given birth to a varied efflorescence of philosophical and religious systems. First we have the primitive pantheism of the East setting forth in a thousand symbols the search for absolute unity by the help of natural forces. In Greece we find it represented either in the idealism of the Eleates or the naturalism of Thales and Heraclitus, which led to the stoical doctrine of the creative fire and of the seminal cause of things. Protagoras was one of the earliest though not best-known promoters of pantheism. Democritus said Πάντα ῥεῖ—"everything flows on." "One never bathes twice in the same water of the river." There is neither beginning nor end where everything meets. Nothing exists but phenomena. This form of pantheism which denies the conception of Eternity is the most consistent

[1] "Aeneid," Book VI.

and logical. In the Alexandrians we have a return to the mythical pantheism of the East and to the doctrine of emanation. In modern times Germany has been the home of pantheism. Spinoza is the philosopher who has most thoroughly thought out naturalistic pantheism.[1] Hegel developed a very complicated system of pantheism. Göethe was one of the most eminent of all modern pantheists. Fichte and Schelling belong to the idealistic school of pantheists. There are not one, but a thousand varieties of pantheism, and all have affinities with mysticism. Spinoza is sometimes carried away by his idealistic enthusiasm; Göethe falls into realism full of youthful and complacent imaginings; Schelling breaks forth into poetical effusions, in his own mind he re-forms creation; Hegel rises to the heights of pure thought. They all have the consciousness of the cosmic mystery, of the ineffable; and a poetic and almost religious piety, which both troubles and charms us, pervades their works. In this we see at once the danger and the inefficiency of their teaching.

In our day Pantheism has ceased to be. Materialists on both sides of the Rhine have exposed its defects, and thus rendered great service to the cause of light and freedom. Nevertheless this doctrine, which nursed the fancies of the learned in 1830, had very great attraction for some minds. Vaporous, impregnated with German reverie and Indian ecstasy, composed of sun and shadow, it touched at the same time the experimental sciences (the results of which it distorted whilst embellishing them with poetical colour) and religious mysticism, mingling with them a delicately erotic sensualism. God was everywhere—in the sighing forest, in the sobbing stream, in the old oak showing the trickling wound inflicted by the axe, in the rose opening to the morning light, and in the sweet-toned nightingale. Man betrothed himself to nature in the depths of the great woods; he knew no distinction between her and himself. He had only to live and to let God act in him—that God who sleeps in the plants, wakes up in the animal, and who rises to full life in man.

Two causes explain the fascinations of Pantheism. Its

[1] Fénelon exposed and refuted Spinoza's system. Part II., Chap. iii.

principles are too certainly destructive of all faith, and when put to the proof yield nothing but emptiness; its language stamps it a religion of rhapsody, breathing forth the passion of the divine. When Margaret asks Faust whether he believes in God, "Do I believe in Him?" says the doctor, and immediately there burst from his lips in burning and melodious accents that eternally sublime though empty profession of faith which filled the poor girl's soul with voluptuous delight. Add to this that Pantheism declared itself to be the only force capable of advancing humanity in the path of progress, and that, consequently, for a long time the words "democracy" and "Pantheism" were considered synonymous. Thus is it that Pantheism has succeeded during this century in entrapping so many distinguished minds and honest souls.

The first fault committed by Pantheism is its being a compromise between spiritualistic metaphysics and pure naturalism. It flatters the highest aspirations of our nature, and produces in us a sort of metaphysical intricacy the charm of which is too fascinating. The beauty and attraction of the system consist in the fact that it maintains a very high idea of the divinity; but does it not fall sadly below its principles when it makes the divine life consist in the life of the world, in the laborious groping for its way through the obstacles presented by evil, sufferings, falls, and death? Does it not dishonour its conceptions to maintain, as the Pantheists do, that "God is neither good nor bad"; that there is no Providence; and that nothing has been ordered with view to an end? "Good and bad," says Spinoza in his "Ethics," "have no more relation to the true nature of things than the Dogstar in the heavens, the celestial sign, has to the barking animal of that name."

Another fault of the pantheist is to imagine that he has seen the foundation of all things, and to pretend that there is but one substance. What can he know of this? He fancies he can reason with mathematical precision on the notion of substance, a notion of unfathomable obscurity, beyond the reach of human intelligence. Spiritualist philosophers say that the primary source of substance exists, and that there is no phenomenon without substance. "I feel my individuality—I am conscious that my substance

is not the same as that of the exterior world. Here are at least two substances—the rest of the world and myself. This is rational. The pantheists say that there are no phenomena without substance. We all form one group of phenomena. We are necessarily bound in closest connection with all the phenomena that form the Great All.

Ἓν καὶ τὸ πᾶν—"There is but one existence, and that existence constitutes the whole." In this way we can understand how it is that logical pantheists, like Hegel, come to maintain the identity of opposites. To them all phenomena are phenomena of the one divine substance. In their limited view spiritualists see a fundamental difference between sickness and health. They suppose that the substances in which these phenomena occur are different. With the pantheist it is quite otherwise! Sickness and health are phenomena of one and the same substance; by consequence, these phenomena are equally divine, and, therefore, naturally identical. In destroying the supreme individuality of God pantheists refuse to the Being of beings what they are obliged to grant to the meanest insect in nature. After having filled everything with god, the thoughtful pantheist sees that the true God is nowhere, and thus easily arrives at atheism. Father Gratry used to call "Pantheism true atheism plus a lie." It is really better to say that God does not exist at all. God, such as humanity has always instinctively conceived Him to be, is an intelligent Being, conscious of Himself, Omniscient, and All-powerful. Here, in order to preserve the divine element, the name of God is given by pantheists to all finite beings. Go and tell one of the people that the "Great All" is God, but that this God is only a name. This All, which is God, has none of the qualities of that God whom I naturally desire, and in whom alone I wish to place my trust. The soul of man needs a real concrete force to support it, not an empty abstraction. It must have a living God ready to listen and to reply. Conscience stands in need not of a rule formulated by itself, but of a Legislator who commands it in the midst of the clamour of human passion. These are the needs of man, and pantheism has never satisfied them. If God is not all, He is something, He cannot be nothing. The truth is that God works in Divine ways; that His view of

things is not limited in range like ours, but universal; that the order of finality which we perceive is but a portion of the entire order; and that in reality our ways of thinking and speaking of God are very imperfect.[1]

Another error, and the gravest, into which pantheists fall, is that they teach the men of our day to call in question the existence of their liberty, and to look upon themselves as not free agents. Each one imagining himself to be God, considers himself to be both without sin and without responsibility, infallible and irresponsible. If the individual cannot sin, neither can society. Progress urged humanity forward, and it advanced. If humanity, like the world, is but a manifestation of the divine substance, it is in everything subject to necessity. Spinoza accepted this consequence, but Schelling denied it. The question is, did not Spinoza show himself to be more logical than Schelling? From the moment you refuse to distinguish substantially man from God, you deprive him of all spontaneous activity. Freedom is not secured by our being a part of the manifestation of universal force; we must possess a force within ourselves that controls our own actions. Otherwise why should we make any effort? It is simpler to trust to fate. According to the difference of their natures some will plunge into spiritual ecstasy, others will allow themselves to be drawn towards material pleasures. Mysticism, or degradation, or at least inertia and self-neglect, are the practical consequences of fatalistic pantheism. It is not only reason and virtue, but all the errors of passion and the evils of brute force, which are thus made divine.

In short, pantheism would be unintelligible were it not for the previous notion of a personal God, of which it seeks to deprive us. When the atheist says, "There is no God," it is not an opinion of which the literal sense is obscure. Our hypothesis is not needed to explain the creation. The pantheist, on the contrary, claims the mastery over hypothesis. He fancies that he is destroying a superstition when he denies that God is distinct from the universe. Now does not such a definition of the Divinity, without the notion of God, become an inexplicable enigma? Is it not by the

[1] Pantheism has been admirably refuted by M. Jules Simon in "The Devoir," and by M. Ernest Bersot in his "Essai sur la Providence."

implicit confounding of a precise with an obscure idea that we fancy we understand it? Identity of being and idea, harmony of sentiment with reason, progress of the mind in regard of itself through the different conceptions of the divinity, from the pagans down to Hegel, knowledge of self—all these phantoms fly as we advance!

At the present time there are but few active advocates of pantheism. A short while ago men did not dare boldly to profess atheism, and, thanks to pantheism, they were only too glad to adorn materialism with the name of God. Except among poets, pantheism is now disappearing from our midst; unbelievers avow themselves either sceptics or atheists.[1]

Nevertheless, we will speak of M. Vacherot, since he is the most vigorous and brilliant representative of pantheism in France.

To M. Vacherot God is an ideal, a being whose very perfection forbids His reality. God cannot be real, precisely because He is perfect. God is inherent, He constitutes the obscure law of things. And when Father Gratry reproached M. Vacherot with being an atheist, the philosopher defended himself by an indignant protest. His indignation simply shows us how natural the religious sentiment is to man, and what a firm hold it has on his heart. If M. Vacherot had calmly examined the accusation he would not have been able to feel any offence, in his work he was frankly pantheistic. Yet he sharply resented the appellation of "Atheist." This word he considered implied not only the negation of the God of the masses, but the denial also of the high instincts of human nature. "What!" he says, "I an atheist! I who believe in virtue and in conscience, in liberty and in duty!" That so powerful a mind should be so deceived is a proof that religious feeling is natural to man. And yet M. Vacherot's inmost thoughts appear clearly in his work, "La Métaphysique et la Science." The philosopher imagines a dialogue between the reader and himself. After having

[1] Since the death of Madame Blavatsky, in spite of various exposures of charlatanism on the part of some of its leading members, theosophy has succeeded in attracting a considerable number of adherents both in England and in America. This, in the former country, is chiefly owing to the eloquence of the high-priestess of the system, Mrs. Annie Besant, upon whose shoulders the mantle of Madame Blavatsky has descended.

explained his system, his interlocutor is made to address this question to him—"Then, if there were no intelligence, there would be no God, since there would be none to form a conception of Him?" The author answers—"You understand my system clearly enough to prevent your being deceived." The obvious meaning of the answer is this—"Evidently there would be none!" God is, then, the Ideal conceived by all intelligence. If there were no intelligence in the universe God would not exist. M. Vacherot has himself changed his conceptions of God. In the "Nouveau Spiritualisme" he allows a certain place to experience, and approaches a little nearer to the general belief. But still this God is not the God of humanity, who is conscious of Himself, and who can say, "I am God, and know what I will!" His is a God from whom nothing is to be either hoped or feared.

IV.

We come now to Atheism and Materialism, properly so called. There is a materialism which advocates belief in mere chance as the cause of things, and another kind, namely, that of the learned men of our day. The former, which is Epicureanism, denies the existence of intelligence. Matter is the cause of all that exists. The world is a concourse of unconscious atoms and phenomena: the atoms necessarily possess qualities; phenomena result from their meeting and their contact. This system has been sifted by Cicero in his "De natura deorum," and by Fénelon in his "Traité sur l'existence de Dieu," also by Gassendi. It has not yet recovered from these attacks, and is practically extinct. This is not the case with structural materialism, which is far less absurd than that of the Epicureans.

This materialism differs from the positivism school in not being content with suppressing metaphysics. It does not waive the problems of principles and causes, but resolves and decides them. It is a new system of dogma. According to the mechanical philosophers there is only one substance in action from all eternity. In the series of physical, intellectual, and moral phenomena there is no sudden passage from one order of substances to another,

there is only insensible transition. The principle of movement resides inherently in matter. The cause of life is movement. The cause of thought is life. Thought and life are but forms of movement which is the original quality inherent in eternal matter. As regards nature, having no transcendent principle, it has neither object nor end beyond itself. The partisans of this system acknowledge the facts to which spiritualist philosophers appeal. They recognise that there is order and harmony in the world, and that the different kingdoms in nature are made for each other. They explain this order and harmony in their own way. It is simply an equipoise. There is in beings an innate attraction towards the good. All phenomena tend to persevere in existence. Each element has its properties. All elements contend against each other. The weak give way and the powerless are eliminated. The rest are able to live. Consequently the result cannot fail to be a combination at once strong and harmonious. They delight in high-sounding phrases, they say: "Nature is an artist," and they speak of the destiny of things!

We have already pointed out the answer to be given. There are too many traces of finality, too many complications in the mechanism of the world, for us to admit that this mechanism is the blind result of mere fatalism. The individual combinations which form the general combination are too complicated for the adaptations to be explained by these eliminations of which we are told. I admit that the feeble elements are conquered by the strong, and that the result is an harmonious, vigorous, and indestructible system; but what cannot be maintained is that from this arises a system so complicated as ours, a complication which ever tends towards a definite purpose. The simple struggle amongst the elements does not account for the existence of organised beings, nor for the complicated organisation of living beings. Doubtless, were there nothing in existence save this Nature, immense, cold, inert, and silent, it would be difficult to prove the existence of God. A mind placed in presence of such a spectacle would say—"It is splendid and admirable, but does it present to us any reason for imagining that there is a God?" On the contrary, how, by a blind struggle between the different elements, can one

explain a being so complicated as man? How explain that there is affinity between corn, vegetables, meat, and our digestive organs, or between hay and those of the lower animals? If there were nothing in existence but pure chance, nature might not produce any corn, and on what should we then subsist? How can we explain the fact that food is changed into blood and flesh, thus nourishing the human being? Nature and men do not act in concert. How is it, then, that nature produces exactly what is necessary for our nourishment? How can we explain the mutual intercourse of the different kingdoms in nature?

"Grant it," say the materialists, "but the inter-connection of things seems to favour our materialistic explanation. Disasters, cataclysms in this planet, and the sufferings of organised beings—all these are much easier to understand as a necessary consequence of the organisation of things, than as occurring because God allows or wills them. Evil seems to be the cause of living beings, it draws from Nature itself an impression of materialism. Assuredly—for it is to us more than a mere opinion, it is a certainty—if there had been no revelation man could not have discovered spiritualistic philosophy. Spiritualism has been at all times but an effort to render religious conceptions rational. There always have been religions. The moral sentiment has been awakened by religious education. Thus informed, intellectual minds were able to discover true spiritualism, to free it from myths and legends, and endeavour to introduce reason and good sense into the religious systems that had been bequeathed to them. Christianity stands alone as of value when we are called upon to formulate judgments on these questions. It does not suppress any painful facts, but the explanation of them which it gives us—that such is the will of God—is true, although it does not appear to be the most natural one. Christianity is far from suppressing mysteries, but it is strong and decisive, because it rests on solid proof.

However, there are many objections to Atheism and great difficulties in the way of its acceptance.

The greatest is that "Something" exists. Whence comes this something? The only really logical atheism is that which goes as far as idealism; which suppresses all

existences, not only those independent of the individual who thinks, but also the substantial existence of the thinker. To arrive at such a conclusion as this is the height of folly. Nevertheless it has been the conviction of more than one powerful and logical mind in the history of philosophy.

Another great objection to Atheism is the existence of human intelligence. If there is no God there is no truth. And yet, obeying the universal instinct of human nature, man believes that truth does exist. Hence believing spontaneously, and of necessity, that Absolute Truth exists, man believes in God.[1] If God does not exist, if all is reduced to matter and fate, our intellect becomes simply a phenomenon produced by the series of necessary phenomena. Consequently there is nothing certain in the laws guiding the intellect. The negation of God is the ruin of the intellect. In accordance with the most imperious needs of our nature we aspire with all our strength to attain to certainty. We believe that our intellect teaches us the truth. There are points on which we cannot conceive that it should err. To accept scepticism we must do violence to our nature. "Scepticism is not human," says M. Faguet, "I mean scepticism in the highest sense of the term, examination, discussion, and research."[2] If God does not exist, neither do truth and absolute certainty exist, for intellect and conscience would then be only the result of the evolution of phenomena. That which takes one form to-day may take quite another to-morrow. Let us suppose the human race to disappear in a great cataclysm, and nature to bring into existence by the play of its forces another intelligent being, can we affirm that this being would not know and see things in a different manner from ourselves? If God does not exist there is no reason to concern ourselves about any kind of truth; and to admit that, is to go against all the best instincts of our nature. It is not a paradox to say with Leibnitz—"At the bottom of all judgment, of all

[1] See "On Truth," by Professor St. George Mivart, and "The Origin of Human Reason," by the same author. Dr. W. G. Ward's "The Philosophy of Theism," Mr. Wilfrid Ward's "The Wish to Believe," and Cardinal Newman's "Grammar of Assent," should also be carefully studied.

[2] "Dix-huitième siècle," introduction, p. xiv.

information, whatever it may be, we find a spontaneous belief in the existence of God."[1] Whether we wish it or not, there is but one way of avoiding the necessity of believing, and that is by abstaining altogether from thought.

Then how does it happen that reason and beings are made one for the other, and that there is a pre-established harmony between them? Hypothesis arises from preliminary experience, but hypothesis would be impossible were there not, between the human mind and reality, a pre-established harmony. M. Bernard, speaking of new ideas occurring to the man of learning as suddenly as a lightning flash, declares that our minds possess "intuition or consciousness of the laws of nature."[2] This is the theory of "scientific invention" propounded by Göethe in his "Aphorisms." But Göethe is still more explicit. He is convinced that there exist in the human mind "ideas which correspond to laws as yet unknown in nature." Genius, then, bears within itself the formulæ of the laws hidden in the silent depths of nature. But how can this relation exist if it has not been established by means of some preconceived harmony between the world and the human mind? If this order is guessed or anticipated by our reason, is this a fortuitous and barren coincidence? And ought we not also to attribute to the same first cause both the design followed in nature, and the design traced out in the ideal conceptions of our reason? What can this secret instinct be but a final cause? The correspondence of man's mind with reality and its foreseen laws transcends the narrow bounds of phenomena. The faculty of idealisation, of seeing more and better things than the visible, of rising above the icy splendours of the world's immensity and launching one's thoughts into the ideal, cannot be explained by materialism. Man endeavours to re-create the world after the pattern of his own ideas, by science, by art, and by charity. If this labour were merely the work of mechanism, thought and reason would be the most incomprehensible phenomena of the universe. "Is the belief that the mind is made for truth anything but an

[1] "Théodicée."

[2] "Introduction à la Médicine experimentale," pp. 59, 266, *et seq.*

acknowledgment of finality in the world, and of the pre-established harmony existing between the laws of thought and of being? And, consequently, is this not also a more or less implicit confession of a Common Author of both, who has made thought for the world and the world for thought?"[1]

Against materialism proper there is the proof of the human soul with all its lights, aspirations, and needs.[2] The magnificent, mathematically proportioned structures made by man, his metaphysical faculty, the thought which conceives such far-reaching problems, are difficult to explain by the evolution of matter. Can we account by matter only, by matter ruled by fate, for the sciences that man's intelligence has elaborated, the wealth of sentiment that has given birth to romance, to remarkable psychological analyses, and to poems of such flight? The beautiful robes itself in defiance of all purely physico-chemical or physiological explanations of the human soul. No force, no combination of atoms, can explain the emotions of the beautiful experienced by man, they are so many proofs of the human soul. And what a proof of mind is that *nisus*, that mental effort which exists in every human being! If matter were sovereign, if it were able to rule, we could not understand its being so subservient to the will of individuals. There is in every man something instinctive and personal, which is not to be explained. If there is nothing but matter in all human beings, how can one individual designedly produce modifications within himself? We can understand that in the purely mechanical order there may be variations sufficiently explained by concomitant circumstances, but one cannot explain on the same hypothesis how man could, starting from so low a point, have by his own unassisted effort attained to such heights. How, in short, if everything is mechanical and subject to fate, can we explain that the conjunction of certain phenomena produces the illusive appearance of liberty? Men say that everything is connected together in all beings as it is in the works of a watch, and they pretend that from this blind mechanism

[1] Élie Rabier, "Discours sur la méthode," p. 127.

[2] We need not insist upon this proof, having already considered it from another point of view in Chap. ii.

such a combination as the human soul results, though it is conscious of being free. If it were true, as the determinists say, that the consciousness of liberty is merely an illusion in man, it would still be necessary to explain how this illusion of liberty can result from phenomena subject to absolute necessity. If there is not an atom of liberty in nature, whence comes this combination in the human soul, believing itself absolutely free and unable to imagine itself otherwise? Whence, and how is it? Let the materialists answer! Liberty is not to be explained by physiological antecedents whether chemical or physical. It is in its essence, if not in its effects, beyond and above them. More than this, by virtue of that moral force which is its law, it is both outside of and superior to the conditions both of time and space.

This is the great human proof which each man feels, without having ever philosophised. Do we not see that spiritualistic philosophy would be condemned beforehand if its truth depended on particular chemical studies—in organism, in vitality, or in spontaneous generation? Spiritualistic philosophy if true ought to be within every man's reach. For this reason, the idea of purpose being a fundamental idea of the human mind, it is repugnant to man to admit that all he beholds in nature, which speaks of design, is the necessary result of a blind combination of the elements. No technical or special arguments are needed here. He who, through his whole life, acts upon the idea of purpose understands that it must exist in nature. How indeed can he imagine that nature has fabricated a being to whom the idea of purpose is fundamental, but who, nevertheless, is himself a living contradiction to it? Therefore no man who rightly interprets the testimony of his conscience, and of his mind, can possibly become an atheist.

Strictly speaking, materialism has no history, or at least what it has can be related in a few lines. To go back to the Epicureans, the whole theory of materialism is contained in a few formulæ. With them matter is eternal; nothing proceeds from nothing,[1] and nothing perishes; there are

[1] "Nothing can ever come forth from nothing."—"A Buddhist Catechism," p. 41.

only atoms and the void; there are no final causes. Materialists have a vague idea of natural selection, they assert their belief in spontaneous generation. The atomic and mechanical system is adopted and applied by them even to the human soul and the social organism.[1] Contemporary materialism has not deviated from this programme, it has only added to it some few scientific notions. Its language even has not changed, it is, as has been said, an edition *ne varietur*. The progress of science has indeed forced materialism to make an approach to spiritualistic philosophy. Contemporary materialists admit, like ourselves, the excellence of the general universal laws which govern the world. Chance and disorder find less and less frequently any place in their explanation of the world. But they say that intelligence is not necessary to explain this order, that evolution and mechanism are sufficient.

In France, materialism as a philosophical system belongs to the eighteenth century. Most of the Encyclopædists, the great philosophic authorities of the time, Helvetius, d'Holbach, Diderot, Lamettrie, Naigeon, and Voltaire[2] sometimes, were materialists. We find in certain pages of Diderot the general principles of the books of MM. Taine, Büchner,[3] and Moleschott. The theory of Charles Darwin has contributed much towards the spread and consolidation of the materialist thesis in France as well as in England. All the strength of that system is to-day derived far more from his works and discoveries than from the antiquated arguments of ancient manuals.

M. Taine is the most zealous representative of materialism, and we shall confine our attention to his statements. His conception of things is absolute materialism. For him not a shadow of soul or conscious intelligence exists anywhere. Things have always existed; everything unrolls itself as fate determines. "An inflexible determinism grips

[1] There are exceptions as regards the human soul, for Lucretius frankly admits its liberty.

[2] In Voltaire's eyes God is a sort of moral policeman who faithfully protects our property.

[3] See "A Discussion with an Infidel," a review of Büchner's "Force and Matter," published by the Art and Book Co., Leamington.

all facts in the steel forceps of its necessary laws."[1] There always have been existing entities; these have always had properties; and in virtue of these properties innumerable phenomena have always been produced, one necessitated by the other. There is no such thing as substance either material or spiritual; there are only facts. M. Taine believes that man composes poems and constructs machines in obedience to fate, just as the beaver builds its hut and the bird its nest.

Yet he has written a sublime passage on eternity and the vision of heavenly things. We see that the problem of the beyond has swayed him as it has other people. He is too frank to mention God in his system, though others who adopt it are unwilling to be called atheists. If there are philosophers who, while offering a similar explanation of things, still find a place for the Divinity and think themselves religious, they are worshipping a creation of their own minds. No sensible man can consider that God, a mere formula, as described by Taine, is a real Being. An abstraction which produces realities will not be taken seriously by any one. We have no allegiance to offer Him, and neither punishments nor rewards to expect from Him. Taine's God is really Necessity, the Ἀνάγκη of the ancients. Why pray to Necessity since it acts according to fate? It has no right to our respect, for it possesses no virtue. We need not trouble ourselves to consider whether our actions are good or bad, for fatalism is blind and unconscious. It only remains for us to live without self-delusion under the weight of the frozen universe, and to weave straw in this our prison to while away the time. It is not more reasonable to feel religious emotion under such a system than it is to worship a wooden image or a block of marble. A formula that represents God, or a God who is but a formula, is an idol. Materialists vainly paint and embellish nature, for her face is always cold as an abstraction and hard as fate. Humanity will never make up its mind

[1] The poet Lucretius said the same thing with the same energy and precision—*Indupedita suis fatalibus omnia vinclis*.—"De nat. rer.," Book V., v. 874. The assurance with which atheists and others are wont to dogmatise, as if their theories left no room for doubt and discussion, reminds one of the line in Latimer's "Sermon of the Plough," where he says—"And when he (the devil) had once brought Christ to the cross, he thought all cocksure."

to see in living nature a frigid mechanical theorem, unconscious of itself, in which no thought exists but that of the "savant" who pulls its works to pieces.

Thus we see that the majority of the philosophers whom we have called "the opponents of spiritualistic philosophy" have attacked the notion of a personal God, the supreme ruler of conscience and principle, and the sanction of morals, just as the philosophers of the eighteenth century attacked the God of Revelation and the requirements of a positive religion. We find the refutation of their theories in the demonstration of spiritualism which declares and proves that God can be known, and that therefore He exists.

The great reproach which we urge against all their systems is that they wound the religious sentiment natural to man, and that they ruin too many hopes. This is the objection which we have already urged, especially against positivists. Certain anthropologists have lately tried to discover in some forest of Central Africa, or in some remote island of Oceania, atheistical tribes. From these researches has resulted a truth of scientific observation, viz., the universality of the religious phenomenon. These researches, pursued for a century in all directions, have firmly established the existence of the religious sentiment, in connection with two others that belong to man alone, namely, his feeling relative to the small room he fills in space and the small space he occupies in time. M. de Quatrefages undertook to investigate amongst all the races of men the diverse manifestations of the religious sense, of which M. Guyau in the "Irreligion de l'avenir" now disputes the character and even the existence. The conclusion come to by M. de Quatrefages is this—"Morality and religiosity are the attributes of the whole human kingdom."[1] Everywhere there have been found authentic manifestations of religiosity and of morality. Research has been prosecuted among the most savage tribes. As the Hottentots have neither idols nor temples it had been concluded that they were atheists. M. Hahn had to live nine years in the midst of those savages to confute this preconceived opinion. He declares that the

[1] Rapport de 1867, pp. 39-71.

Hottentots possess a very complicated mythology, and that they place above secondary deities a superior God named Tsin-Goa. They pray to him each morning, and sing in his honour a hymn which M. Hahn has reproduced. M. Crétillat, in his "Théologie systématique,"[1] confirms the opinion of Quatrefages. "The whole of Paganism," says Lucken, "has retained the idea of a supreme God; it is even oftener to be found among savages than among civilised races." "The Esquimaux and the Lapp in their ice-cave; the Indian of the New World under the leafy domes of his forests; the negro blackened on the sands by the sun of a fiery desert; the Malay, isolated in his distant islands, half submerged by the waters of the Pacific; the priests of India and Egypt, teaching their religions of mystery, like the Greeks and the Romans discoursing in their schools in exquisite language and with most exact dialectic,—in a word, mankind at every period of his history, in every stage of civilisation, and in whatever part of the planet he may be discovered, looks beyond the tomb and speaks of immortality. This sublime cry reaches us also from every druidical stone of ancient Britain and Gaul, from the blood-stained altars of Paganism, from the withered lips of the mummies imprisoned in their granite sarcophagi, from the Roman houses discovered under the lava of volcanoes, as well as from the earliest of our Christian temples."[2] There is nothing more mysterious than philosophical or religious belief. The mystery is that since historic times, since serious history has existed, although experience affirms nothing concerning the supernatural world—not even its existence—man has a strong conviction of the reality of that spiritual world. One could understand even an elementary materialism in a general way, and a few enlightened minds, suggesting the possibility of something beyond experience. But just the contrary is the case, and here is the paradox. "God cannot be known." How, then, can we explain the fact that humanity, from its origin, has believed itself to possess the knowledge of God's existence, and how can we explain the fact that man goes straight to God

[1] P. 258.
[2] Père Didon, "Deux problèmes religieux," July, 1896, p. 164.

as if he had seen Him, and this under every sky?[1] Man is the only being who has dreamt of and imagined a supernatural invisible world, and who has made this idea the rule of his private and the basis of his public and social life. Humanity goes to God—not to the complicated God of philosophy, but to a God sometimes conceived after a superstitious fashion. This thirst for belief has often allayed itself at most impure sources. Man is convinced that there is not here below merely dead automatic nature, but that there is also something living—indeed, a personal God. His gaze pierces the curtain of matter which surrounds him; under his vesture of atoms he feels the pulsations of an immortal spirit. We do not go so far as to say with Hensterwis—"One single sigh of man after a better world is more than a mathematical demonstration of the Divinity!" It is, however, no less true that the existence of religion is an objection which will always embarrass the makers of systems intended to suppress God. Boyle, the most acute adversary of positive religions, never tried in all his sceptical works to give an explanation of the existence of religion, or to explain how men everywhere have come to imagine the existence of the supernatural. This objection is stronger than all the arguments of philosophy. It would be truly astonishing had man from the beginning of his existence been pursuing a chimera. He would then be the only being in the world thus constituted. No reality can content him! It is the highest part of himself which revolts at the thought that after this life all is at an end for him. Religious feeling in him softens the natural horror of the tomb. It is the high and noble form of his eternal anxiety. So long as the incredulous have not explained in a reasonable manner the existence of religion, they will not be able to attack it effectively. "Who then," says Plato, "could fail to acknowledge in the depth of his heart the existence of the gods?"[2]

To sum up, all the systems we have discussed resolve themselves into the most radical and simple of doctrines,

[1] *Quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus.*
[2] "De legibus," Book X.

materialism.[1] We will not be more severe towards this doctrine than was Lange, the author of the "Histoire du matérialisme." After having glorified the system from a scientific point of view, he pronounces as to its morals the most severe judgment, and adds: "Religion, by raising us above the real, deserves the esteem of the most scientific minds." M. Lefèvre, a disciple of M. Lange, in a recent work reproaches his master with "seeking the future and the reason of things under the influence of an exaggerated idealism." The inconsistencies of such men show how powerful is this greatest of human facts, seeing that only frivolity or obstinacy of mind can succeed in eliminating it from the explanation of all we see around us.

We do not believe that a single really intelligent and well-informed materialist dares to deny this saying of a sceptic—"Hypothesis for hypothesis, it is easier to conceive of an eternal Intelligence than of eternal matter," as a final explanation of all that exists; for, according to Voltaire, "in the system which admits of a God there are only difficulties to surmount; in the others there are difficulties to devour." "What have these rare geniuses discovered," said Bossuet to the innovators of his day, who were, after all, but timidly speculative compared with those of our times; "what have they seen more than others? They have not seen anything—they have not heard anything. They have no means of establishing the nothingness after which they aspire, for even this miserable inheritance is not assured to them."[2] After four thousand years of spiritualism

[1] As to the objection made by opponents of spiritualistic philosophy that its advocates are not capable of true devotion; that with eyes fixed on the future life they are no better after all than a set of prudent calculators, who, at the cost of some ephemeral sacrifices, prepare for themselves an eternity of joy: such an objection refutes itself. It would be an unanswerable reproach if there were no objection against Providence, and if the human soul were reasonably incapable of doubt. At the root of the firmest faith there remains always the possibility of a doubt that gives to acts, most sure of their reward, the merit of disinterestedness. For, as we have seen, there is no lack of arguments against the existence of God which might embarrass the most believing souls. We should be too happy on earth were God like the sun, and if it were sufficient merely to open our eyes idly in order to witness the splendour of His reality. The Gospel phrase, "Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed" (St. John xx. 29), would then be meaningless. If God is, He desires to be sought.

[2] "Oraison funèbre d'Anne de Gonzague."

and two thousand years of Christianity, no sensible man will believe that nothing remains for humanity but to bow down before a negative adjective—the "Unknowable!"[1]

[1] "Those who are called on to take part in the strifes between the Churches may, for a while, shut their eyes to the fact, but few thoughtful men whose attention is drawn to it will refuse to grant that, ultimately, later or sooner, the great contest of thought must be fought, not between two varying forms of the Christian faith, nor between the Protestant sects and unbelief, but between that historic Church of which the sects are but rebellious children, however they may deny their parentage and the modern spirit, call it by what name we will."—"Faith and Unfaith," by C. Kegan Paul, p. 9.

PART II.

CHRISTIANITY.

CHAPTER I.

JESUS AND HIS RELIGION.

"Even to the present day Rationalism can scarcely look at Him intently save on bended knees."—RÉNAN, "Études d'histoire religieuse."

"The Kingdom of Heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field. Which is indeed the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown up, it is greater than all herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and dwell in the branches thereof."—S. Matthew xiii. 31, 32.

"In the whole history of our planet there is but one event full of sweetness and consolation—the coming of Christ."—AUG. COCHIN, "Les Espérances chrétiennes."

IN approaching the facts of Christianity, a theologian would not fail to begin by establishing, as a thesis, "the possibility and the necessity of Revelation." We believe such a thesis to be useless. That revelation is possible, no Christian can doubt, since it has taken place. That it is necessary, may be disputed. If it was necessary it should not have been made so late. If, at the present day, it is necessary for man, it must have been so in all ages. Now, if man could do without it for four thousand years, why could he not have done without it for ever? Again, why is revelation not universal? Why is it still unknown to the majority of the human race? Revelation, on the contrary, is a purely gratuitous act. It is necessary in this sense alone, that without it nothing is possible save doubt. Rationalistic philosophers own that Catholicism includes all the dogmas of natural religions in their purest form. Let us not inquire, then, whether revelation is possible or necessary. We have something better to do—a fact, astonishing even to the unbeliever, presents itself to our eyes—a prodigious fact! It is inconceivable that an intelligent man, even were he not troubled by the problem of his destiny, should not desire to succeed in discovering the

origin and explanation of this circumstance. A reasonable mind, content with the amount of light it has received, must admit that a Crucified Man reigns as Monarch over the world!—the Christian religion is no chimera—it is a public and a social fact, and we have to account for it. This is the true method of procedure, and a far more definite starting point. Instead, then, of inquiring whether a revelation is possible, the only question capable of interesting us is this—"Whence comes Catholicism, and are its statements true?"[1]

Those to whom we address ourselves have seen that the God of spiritualism is the only God deserving the name, and all other gods so-called are mere abstractions, formulas, or idols. Given reflection and some knowledge of history, it is readily understood that man did not arrive at so exalted and exact a notion of the Deity by means of his unaided reason. It must be confessed that if millions upon millions of non-Christians still believe in God, they are indebted for this belief to Catholicism. The whole system of Monotheism is derived from it. Christians of all sects, Mahometans, believers in the supernatural—all in fact who do not regard God as a mere formula but a living and powerful Being, owe this notion to the passing of Jesus Christ through this world. The religions of the Far East, Buddhism, Brahmanism, Confucianism, and the rest, have no conception of God as a Creator. Metaphysical Scepticism is their bond of unity. They aspire to found a moral law of love and charity precisely on the invincible ignorance of man as to his origin and destiny.

"Since we can know nothing of that which is above us, why should we be divided? Let us love one another!"

From the mountains of Judea first arose the conception of one only God, and thence it has been popularised throughout the world. During the ages preceding Jesus Christ—

> "Heaven upon earth
> Walked and breathed in a nation of Gods."—ROLLA.

The Jews originally possessed the idea of one God, but

[1] The most striking feature in Catholicism is its marvellous world-wide unity as an existing living fact, which no intelligent person disputes. Here is an institution which unites under one aged and physically powerless Bishop between two and three hundred millions of human beings of every race and nation, who form one compact and absolutely united whole, differing by not so much as a hair's breadth on any single point of faith! Could any merely human agency have accomplished such a result as this?

being cut off from other nations, they were never the apostles of this idea. They kept it to themselves, and it was ultimately Jesus who made it known to the world.

What, then, is this Jesus to whom the civilised world owes this clear and beautiful idea of the Master of the Universe? What is He, who from the Jewish people, and from their system of Monotheism, so narrow and so little known, drew forth the grand Christian Monotheism, vast as the world and holding sway over the whole civilised universe? What is this Jesus, who, from His sepulchre, cast the capitoline Jupiter into the tomb, and who by His Cross has overthrown all those ingenious fables in which ancient Greece, so refined, so learned, and so scornful, took her delight? Who is this Man of heavenly piety, of incomparable gentleness, of unbounded charity, of unprecedented humility, whose teaching, transmitted from age to age, has regenerated souls and renovated society; who has raised up friends, and also foes, irreconcilable even unto death; whose doctrine not only attracts believers, but whose person is the object of a worship, or of a hatred, unique in its kind? He was a simple Jew, crucified by a Roman governor in a subjugated territory, without power, without renown or earthly grandeur; and yet down to the present day this crucified Man reigns supreme over the whole world.

All men who think deeply admire Him; all who believe, adore Him; all who suffer, appeal to Him; all who would overcome evil, invoke Him. The remainder—that is, all who do not know Him—are hurried along the fatal path of vice, impotency, and darkness.

I.

I. Let us contemplate the Man Jesus before examining His work.

The first surprising circumstance is that the Apostles believed Jesus to be God. They could not have believed it if Jesus had not positively stated the fact. Of this we shall adduce proofs, the authenticity of which will be established further on.[1]

From what we know of the Old Testament we are

[1] Chap. ii.

convinced that no Jew would readily admit the possibility of a God's appearing among men in human form. The Old Testament reveals the plan of redemption, it speaks of a "prophet" who is to come into the world, not of a God hypostatically united to our human nature. If St. John is to be relied upon—and we are about to prove that he is—such was certainly the opinion of the Jews. In St. John, chap. x., Jesus says—"Many good works I have showed you from My Father; for which of those works do you stone Me?" The Jews answered Him—"For a good work we stone Thee not, but because Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God."

We see that they would not believe in His Divinity. Again it is clear from chap. v. 18, that they were unwilling to admit such a claim—"The Jews sought the more to kill Him because He did not only break the Sabbath, but also said God was His Father, making Himself equal to God." Moreover, we read in this Gospel—"Neither did His brethren believe in Him." Lastly, Celsus asked the early Christians—"How would you make us believe that God was born of a woman?"

Let us begin by recalling that, in the first days of Jesus Christ's ministry, John the Baptist announced Him as the Christ, the Son of God (Mark i. 7; Luke iii. 16; John i. 27). On the occasion of His baptism a voice was heard from heaven saying—"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased!" The title of Son of God is twice applied to Him by the Tempter himself (Matt. iv. 3-6; Luke iv. 3-9). At the Transfiguration an audible voice proclaimed Him to be "the Son of God" in quite an especial manner—"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him!"

Moreover, Jesus Himself said He was the Son of God, and that not in a metaphorical, but in an absolute sense. Nothing could be clearer or more solemn than His language on this point. The assertions of Jesus concerning Himself are among the most striking proofs of His Divinity. On one occasion, in presence of the Jews, Jesus affirmed His eternal existence in terms impossible to misconstrue, or even to tone down. "Your Father Abraham," He told them, "rejoiced that he might see My day; he saw it and was glad. The Jews therefore said to Him, Thou art not yet

fifty years old, and hast Thou seen Abraham? Amen, Amen, I say to you, before Abraham was made, I am" (St. John viii. 58). If this declaration be not divinely true, it is not merely false, but ridiculous; how, if Jesus had not been conscious of His own Divine identity, could He have said of Himself, in the year 750 after the foundation of Rome, "Before Abraham was, I am"? The Jews, who took up stones to cast at Him, were better interpreters of the sacred text than our modern rationalists. They thoroughly comprehended the import of that assertion, and their shouts accusing Him of "blasphemy" prove that they did not take His words in any other sense than a literal one. "We have a law, and according to this law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God" (St. John xix. 7).

Did Jesus tell the Jews that God was their Father in the same manner that God was His Father; or that they themselves were the sons of God as He was the Son of God? To so simple a statement as this they would readily have agreed. But here they did not agree and He listened to their accusation. He admitted its truth and even confirmed it. On another occasion, Jesus questions His disciples after this manner—"Whom do men say that the Son of Man is?" They answered Him—"Some say John the Baptist, and others Elias, and others Jeremias or one of the prophets."

Jesus saith to them—"But whom do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered and said—"Thou art Christ, the Son of the Living God!"

At this confession of Peter's, Jesus does not protest, but showing the importance He attaches to the title of "Son of God," He replies—"Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona, because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in heaven" (St. Matt. xvi. 13-17). Jesus evidently sets a high value on all that has been said. He clearly places Himself above the greatest prophets; in the most literal sense He is, and claims to be called, the Son of God.

On another occasion, Jesus Christ had given sight to one born blind. After a minute inquiry conducted by the Pharisees, the miracle was publicly proved. Some time afterwards Jesus Christ met the subject of the miracle, who

thanked Him warmly. "Dost thou believe in the Son of God?" asked Jesus. "Who is he, Lord, that I may believe in Him?" His reply was—"Thou hast both seen Him: and it is He that talketh with thee" (John ix. 36, 37). Then the man whom He had healed, falling on his knees, adored Him. With the best will in the world it would be difficult to look on this as a simple metaphor.

In the parable of the father of the family the affirmation of Jesus is even more positive. Here the householder, after having sent his servants, sends at length his son, saying—"They will reverence my son." But the husbandmen, seeing the son, said among themselves—"This is the heir: come, let us kill him, and we shall have the inheritance!" (St. Matt. xxi. 38). So they killed him. The servants are the prophets: the son is Jesus Christ, and the Pharisees understood this, as appears plainly from what follows. Christ was either mocking His enemies in this parable and deliberately provoking them; or He was assuming the character of a true Son. He calls Himself "the Son" in an absolute manner. He is the Heir of His Father. How is it that people are unwilling to enter into considerations so simple as these?

In the same way, in St. Matthew's Gospel, Jesus speaks in a style which formally implies His Divinity. He draws a picture of the Judgment at the last Great Assize. There will be a King sitting in judgment and that King will be Jesus Himself. On His right He will place the sheep, on His left the goats. He will call to the tribunal of Justice the whole human race. To the good He will say—"Come, ye blessed of My Father!" and to the wicked—"Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire!" He will judge of the good or evil done by the one or the other, as having been done unto Himself (St. Matt. xxv).

The whole of this chapter should be read with care, for in it Christ shows Himself to be the supreme Arbiter of human destiny.

On another occasion, Jesus having healed a sick man, sent him away after forgiving his sins. The Pharisees hearing this said among themselves—"This Man blasphemeth. Jesus, seeing their thoughts, said to them, Why do you think evil in your hearts? Whether is it

easier to say, Thy sins are forgiven thee: or to say, Arise and walk? But, that you may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins (then saith He to the sick of the palsy), Arise, take up thy bed and go into thy house! And he arose and went into his house. Upon seeing this," adds the evangelist, "the multitude feared and glorified God, who had given such power unto men" (St. Matt. ix. 8).

Later on He speaks to the Apostles in the same terms—"Go into the whole world, whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained!" Here Jesus acts as God, for only God can forgive or retain sins. This point was well comprehended by the Jews, since they treated Jesus as a blasphemer.

On the eve of His death, Jesus asserts His personal identity with God—"My Father and I are One"—*Unum sumus*. And here we may note that the pronoun is in the neuter to indicate that not a mere moral union, but a substantial union is intended. Is not the identity of the Divine nature in the Father and the Son, which they pretend to deny, really admitted by those who, in order to account for each text, are obliged to adopt this explanation—"The transcendental idealism of Jesus never allowed Him to have a very clear idea of His own personality!"[1] Such an explanation is utter nonsense, for where is the sane man who is unconscious of his own individuality?

Doubtless in His prayer at the Last Supper (that prayer whose accents, truly divine in majesty, calmed the violent doubts with which the soul of Pascal was so frequently assailed), Jesus, as Man, humbles Himself before His Father; but as God, He speaks to Him as an equal; He addresses Him thus—"Father, *I will*"—*volo*—"that where I am, they may be with Me, that they may see My glory, which Thou hast given Me, because Thou hast loved Me before the creation of the world." And, at the moment when He is about to resuscitate Lazarus, He says—"Father, I know that Thou hearest Me always"; that is to say, "if I pray, it is for their benefit, to show them that all comes from Thee. But as for Me, I know well that Thou hearest

[1] "Vie de Jésus," p. 244.

Me always." And in another place He says—"Father, glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee!" At that hour Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Ghost and said—"All things are delivered to Me by My Father. And no one knoweth the Son but the Father; neither doth any one know the Father but the Son, and he to whom it shall please the Son to reveal Him" (Matt. xi. 27; Luke x. 22). Thus they both know one another as they are, and only they possess this knowledge of one another.[1] "Father, all My things are Thine, and Thine are Mine." All is in common between them. Jesus speaks to His Father on equal terms, and He continually recalls the mystery of His unity with the Father—"My Father worketh until now, and I work; what things soever the Father doth, these the Son also doth in like manner: the Father raiseth up the dead and giveth life; so the Son also giveth life to whom He will. For as the Father hath life in Himself, so He hath given to the Son also to have life in Himself" (John v. 17, 19, 21, 26). "He that believeth in Me doth not believe in Me, but in Him that sent Me. And he that seeth Me, seeth Him that sent Me" (John xii. 44, 45). Jesus said to the Jews—"If God were your father, you would indeed love Me. For from God I proceeded and came; for I came not of Myself, but He sent Me" (John viii. 42). Speaking to His Apostles He says—"You have seen the Father, for he that seeth Me seeth the Father also" (John xiv. 7-9).

"He that despiseth Me and receiveth not My words, hath One that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of Myself, but the Father who sent Me. He gave Me commandment what I should say and what I should speak. And I know that His commandment is life everlasting. The things, therefore, that I speak, even as the Father said unto Me, so do I speak" (John xii. 48).

Constantly in the Gospel Jesus takes the position of an absolute Master. With what authority does He not address the Jews—"I am from above: you are from beneath!" He

[1] Strauss, in his "Nouvelle Vie," is obliged to recognise that "we have here a passing gleam of St. John's teaching." St. John, then, was *not* "the first to make a God of Jesus."

calls the "House of God" His house, the moral laws He speaks of as "His yoke." He disposes of the Kingdom of Heaven as its Lord. "This day," He says to the good thief, "thou shalt be with Me in Paradise." He sets Himself up as the model of mankind. "Learn of Me, for I am meek and humble of heart." "I am the way and the truth and the life!" "He that followeth Me walketh not in darkness." Jesus is not satisfied with proposing Himself merely as a model to be imitated. He wills that men should love Him more than father, or mother, or children, more than life itself, more even than their own souls. A mere man, however pure, however sublime he might be, would not dare thus to claim that which is most sacred, most exalted, most potent in human affections. That would be to give little and take all in return. If, on the contrary, Jesus is the Son of God, as He says; and if He became man for the love of man, His claim is intelligible.

But it is especially on the last day of His life that boldly, without quailing, in the presence of Pilate and Caiphas, He vindicates the claims of His Godhead. Pilate asks Him—"Art thou a king?" "If My kingdom were of this world," Jesus answers, "then would My servants fight; but now is My kingdom not from hence." Pilate again asks Him—"Art thou a king, then?" Jesus replied—"Thou sayest that I am a king. For this was I born, for this I came into the world; that I should give testimony to the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice."[1] That same day they led Jesus before an infamous tribunal, composed of His most implacable enemies, and presided over by the High Priest Caiphas. Jesus knew that an affirmative answer would set all the judges against Him, and yet to the words of Caiphas—"I adjure thee by the living God that thou tell us if thou be Christ, the Son of God," Jesus replies, fearless and undisturbed, in these two sublime words, *Ego sum*—"I am!" And He adds—"Nevertheless I say to you, hereafter you shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of the power of God and coming in the clouds of heaven!" And Jesus, speaking thus, knew that it was a question of life and death. He could have saved

[1] This passage is a magnificent epitome of the doctrine of the Incarnation.

His life by an equivocation, but, faithful to His own precept, "Let your speech be: Yea, yea, nay, nay," He replied without evasion, "I am!" Then the High Priest rent his garments, crying—"He hath blasphemed!" The High Priest would not have acted thus had Jesus spoken in a metaphorical manner, or had he not considered this assertion as real blasphemy. If they had understood it in such a sense the Jews would not have declared before Pilate—"We have a law, and according to the law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God." Hence St. Paul, marvelling at this assertion of Christ's, exclaims, when speaking of Him—"Jesus, who gave testimony under Pontius Pilate, a good confession." It cannot then be seriously disputed that Christ throughout His life affirmed Himself to be the Son of God, the only Son of the Eternal Father, equal to Him, one with Him, consubstantial with Him; that the Jews perfectly understood this claim; that they characterised it as impious and blasphemous; that they often attempted to punish Him who put it forward by acts of murderous violence; that they several times tried to stone Him; that they reminded Jesus of this pretended blasphemy, even upon the infamous gibbet, as He was writhing in terrible suffering. "If Thou be the Son of God," they said, wagging their heads, "come down from the cross!" All the facts as regards both the Jews and Pilate, attested by the four Gospels, go to prove that Jesus was condemned to death for having called Himself the King of the Jews, the Son of God. They, therefore, thoroughly comprehended this claim of Jesus, and it was this claim that alarmed them.

The conclusion forces itself upon us in these terms—Either Jesus Christ spoke falsely in proclaiming Himself to be God, or He spoke truly. If He spoke falsely, He was a madman or else an impostor. He must be accounted a madman, for a fanatic may indeed imagine himself to be a seer or a prophet; but only a madman is capable of taking himself to be the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, were he not this in truth. It is clear that Jesus must have been even more fool than impostor to declare himself God if He were not so. But how can we believe this? How believe Him to be a madman, who was the most circumspect, the

wisest, the clearest in judgment, the least impassioned of men? Could this Being, capable of arousing the enthusiasm of multitudes, whose transcendent knowledge compels us to place Him above the level of all humanity, could He be incapable of discerning His own identity? Who would maintain such an opinion? But if not a madman, was He an impostor—an impostor who has had no equal in history, for we read of no insolence that would equal His? Jesus said that He was God. Now, we may dive deeply into legendary lore, and we shall not find another man upon our planet, how proud soever he may have been, who affirmed himself to be God. Never has nation seriously awarded this title to a mortal man. If Jesus Christ told a lie, He must take His place amongst the lowest class of sacrilegious criminals. But in that case we find ourselves among contradictions which reason will not endure. We dare to tax with imposture Him who said—"Let your speech be: Yea, yea, nay, nay; and that which is over and above these is of evil;" this Jesus of whom St. Paul said that "in Him was not, It is and It is not, but, It is;" and St. Peter, that "neither was guile found in His mouth;" this inimitable moralist, this admirable and unsullied pattern of every virtue, how shall we suspect Him of a shameless and most odious fraud? It would be impossible to delude ourselves into maintaining such a supposition. Beyond all question this Man is, as He declares, the Son of God; and then all things are in harmony—His speech, His character, His miracles, His resurrection, the faith of the Apostles, and the unshaken conviction of the martyrs, all become intelligible. Moreover, beyond all doubt, it is precisely in the supernatural character of Jesus, especially in His statements regarding His personality, that His originality consists. Believers and unbelievers alike speak of Him as the Divine Jesus, or else briefly as "the Christ," for even the most barefaced incredulity does not dare to treat Him as simply mortal! As for ourselves, having studied the Gospel, and knowing the many sublime utterances, incomparable in their humility and uprightness, which have issued from His sacred lips, we can never bring ourselves to see in Him either the most insane or the most sacrilegious of deceivers. We are certainly entitled to use the words of M. Schérer (a

man of truly liberal and honest opinion), in answering the question raised by him respecting M. Rénan's theory of the various degrees of sincerity among Orientals—"Was there room in the soul of Jesus, as there was in that of Mahomet, for roguery, and yet at the same time for sincere enthusiasm?" and to say that "we do not hesitate to declare that in regard of Jesus this was impossible." It is clear, then, that Jesus, having affirmed Himself to be God, truly is God, and that the finest intellects amongst men have been right in believing this, not only without scruple, but with the assured consciousness of having fulfilled a sacred duty in doing so.

II. Further, we cannot understand how the disciples of Jesus could have believed Him to be God if He had not led a life absolutely perfect; if He had, on the contrary, manifested the least weakness before them; if He, for example, on any single occasion had either told a falsehood or been unjust. The historical impeccability of Jesus is not contested, even by the most rigorous critics. From the words of the Apostles themselves in their writings, it is evident that they considered that Jesus was never guilty of the least imperfection. Slight human idiosyncrasies had either no existence, or else were wholly overlooked by them. Neither the Jews who rejected Jesus Christ, nor the other adversaries of Christianity, have ever succeeded in bringing serious accusation against Him, however much it might have been to their interest to do so. Several such persons, struck by His superhuman virtues, have rendered Him the most splendid homage.

By means of two indisputable facts, and of a principle which unites them together, we are able to prove the perfect sanctity of Christ.

The first of these two facts is that sceptics in all ages have acknowledged the manifest holiness of Jesus. Even those who, at the present day, contend that Jesus was not perfect, do not deny Him to have been one of the best, if not the very best, of men. They needed but to open the Gospels in order to convince themselves of this.

The associates of Jesus were common people of the poorer sort, penitent sinners, and women both fair and frail. Now

we know that hatred renders an injured man keen to discover the weaknesses of his enemy. Yet suspicion has not dared to sully with its breath the character of the hated Nazarene.

The testimony of the contemporaries of Jesus, both friends and enemies, suffices to prove His goodness and His manifest purity. It was Pilate's declaration—"I find no cause in Him!" It was the confession of His companion in punishment—"And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds, but this Man hath done no evil!" It formed the exclamation of the centurion who had presided at His execution—"Indeed this was a just Man!" It was the despairing cry of the perfidious disciple—"I have betrayed innocent blood!" All these words tell us plainly enough the impression which Jesus made upon those who had been brought into relation with Him. We know, too, the impression which His life made on His special friends who observed Him more intimately during three years. One of them calls Him simply, "Jesus Christ the Just" (1 John ii. 1); another, "A Lamb unspotted and undefiled" (1 Peter i. 19); "He who has not sinned." "Depart from me, Lord, because I am a sinner!" says Saint Peter. They entertain towards Him a deep attachment, even till death; they give Him the place of Mediator between the All-Holy God and their guilty souls, because, in their eyes, Jesus is the best of men, a Man without sin. We ourselves do not think otherwise of Jesus than they did. Whether we consider Him in His childhood, in His youth, in His mature age, in the midst of His family, in the workshop, with His disciples, before the scribes and Pharisees, in prayer, in conversation, in His relations with the rich, or with the common people, whether under blessings or maledictions—everywhere and always, we must admire Him equally, as master of His emotions, and as inaccessible to pride as to discouragement.

A second fact which helps us to prove the perfect sanctity of Jesus is the sublimity of His teaching. His beautiful evangelical maxims are a demonstration of the holiness of Him who utters them. Jesus raised Jewish morality to such a degree of perfection that the enemies of Christianity in all ages have reproached Him for it, saying that its very

sublimity makes it impracticable.[1] Only a good heart could so admirably practise and set forth to others absolute goodness. No one has ever elevated the ideal of purity to so great a height. Jesus condemns even a sinful look or thought. "It was said to the ancients, Thou shalt not commit adultery; but I say to you, that whosoever shall look on a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart!" (Matt. v. 27, 28). "And if thy eye scandalise thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee!" (Matt. v. 29). And as to the pardon of injuries, what does He say? "Pray for those who persecute you and calumniate you, so that ye may be the sons of your Father, who causes His sun to shine upon the good and the wicked, and rain to fall upon the just and the unjust!" And as to His law of sincerity He says—"Let your language be, yea, yea; nay, nay; all that is more comes from the evil spirit!" And His love of the little ones—"In truth, I say unto you, He who shall have given a cup of cold water unto the least of his brethren, for My name's sake, shall not lose his reward." And His counsel respecting prayer and almsgiving—"But thou, when thou shalt pray, enter into thy chamber, and having shut the door, pray to thy Father in secret: and thy Father who seeth in secret will repay thee." "But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth." And His confidence in Providence, which Jesus inculcates throughout the whole of the sixth chapter of Saint Matthew. Such are the teachings which reveal a Divine soul. They are not human ideas. It is difficult to conceive that such doctrine should come from a mere man, of "the earth, earthy," or that He who conceived it was not a Saint. Jesus was, then, an eminently good Man. Strauss was obliged to make this avowal, which was extorted from him by the irresistible power of historical facts. Amongst those persons to whom humanity owes the improvement of its moral conscience, Jesus occupies the first rank. He introduced into our idea of goodness traits which had been wanting until then. By the religious tendency which He imprinted upon morality, He gave it a higher consecration, and by incarnating goodness in His

[1] Celsus reproaches Jesus for His elevated morality in the most sarcastic manner—"Orig. contra Celsum."

own person, He communicated a living warmth to it. In all which bears upon the love of God and our neighbour, and upon the life and purity of heart in the individual, there is nothing to add to the moral instruction left us by Jesus Christ.[1]

Jesus was the best of men, but between that and a state of perfect sanctity there lies a vast abyss—an abyss that we can pass over, thanks to this principle which will guide us to do so—"The holier a man is, the better does he discern the evil which is in him." The nearer a man lives to God the better does he realise that which separates him from God. Men who are reputed to be the most just, see in the mirror of their consciences, when they look therein attentively, wrinkles and stains, if not cankers and defilements. None could think themselves authorised to deny this utterance of the Holy Spirit. Every man is capable of sinning! If Jesus was the best of men, He was then able to perceive, like any one else, the least evil which was in Him, supposing there had been any. But has Jesus ever accused Himself of the least sin? Has one of those tears of penance, which have watered the cheeks of the greatest saints, ever been seen to fall from His eyes? Do we see Jesus striking His breast, and saying, like the publican—"O God! be merciful to me a sinner"? We hear St. Paul cry out with sorrow—"I do the evil which I would not; and the good which I will, I do not, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Are we able to overhear any avowal like this from the lips of Jesus? Cicero tells us, in his "De Fato," that Socrates, seeing his disciples laughing at a physiognomist, who pretended to observe in his features the signs of every vice, declared to them that he really had in his heart the germs of all evil inclinations. Has anything similar to this avowal been uttered by Jesus Christ? Jesus has unveiled evil to the world under the most spiritual and subtle forms. He speaks of sin; He speaks of it constantly, but never as attributable to Himself. "If you who are evil," He says; but not "If we who are evil." Or, again, "When you pray, say, Our Father! . . . forgive us our offences," but never "Forgive Me," nor anything like it. Furthermore, He challenges the Jews thus—"Which of you will convince Me

[1] "Leben Jesu," 1864, p. 625.

of sin?" If He had felt Himself to be burdened with the least sin, could He, without hypocrisy, put to others a question which, between God and Himself, He would have to answer otherwise than they did, and triumph over their silence? It was this consciousness of His perfect innocence that caused Him on His way to Calvary to say to the daughters of Jerusalem—"For if in the green wood they do these things, what shall be done in the dry?" Not only does He know Himself to be incapable of any reprehensible act, but He also has the certitude of never having neglected any of the good which He was called upon to do. "Father," He said, "I have glorified Thee on earth. I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do!" In His last moments this was His consolation—"He that sent Me is with Me, and He hath not left Me alone: for I do always the things that please Him" (John viii. 29; xvi. 32; xvii. 4). When proceeding towards Gethsemane—"The Prince of this world cometh," He said, "but He hath nothing in Me." "One alone is just." Such is the knowledge that Jesus had of Himself. As Keim says—"His is the only conscience without scars in the whole of the history of humanity! It is in vain for critics to seek to put St. Matthew at variance with St. Mark or St. Luke with St. John. A much simpler way to annihilate Christ as a holy personage would be to show us that He who is chaste and meek in St. Matthew was unchaste and passionate in St. Mark; that He who beatified detachment from the world, and whose promises, according to St. Luke, were wholly spiritual, was but a man with carnal ideas, enlisting disciples by putting before them the material restoration of Judaism, according to St. John. But in such attempts they would fail, for the unity of His character and life is the only thing which has not once been disputed. In presence of this moral fact without parallel, there remain but two alternatives—either Jesus is really a perfect Saint, as His own conscience testifies Him to be, or else He is the most blinded and hardened of sinful men, since His conscience has not revealed to Him the fact which every child interiorly understands before his attention is drawn to it, namely, the presence of sin in his soul. Between these two alternatives we have not much trouble

in deciding. Free-thinkers themselves, in recognising Jesus as one of the most moral men that this earth has produced, exclude the second alternative. There remains for them no choice but to grant the first, and to say with us—"The moral miracle is here! Jesus was absolutely holy!" And it is in thus removing the illusions and shadows with which one has tried to distort and veil the figure of Christ that one ends by contemplating His divine image. Let us conclude with these words of Keim (the author of a learned work on the Life of Jesus)—"Behold a conscience which has never felt the least sting of sin! It is not as if He were a lax moralist. Oh, no! He taxed as sinful a simple or an idle word and an impure heart, behind the screen of acts exteriorly virtuous. He energetically reproved the people of His time; He caused His disciples to blush at their weaknesses; He made them pray for the pardon of their faults; but He, the Man with the most burning vocation, the most immense mission, He never asked pardon—no, not even in Gethsemane or on Golgotha; He walked constantly in the light of the sun of the Paternal love of God; He forgave sinners on the part of God; He died for them, and prepared to sit on the tribunal of the All-Holy God."[1]

III. Moreover, Jesus furnished undeniable proof of the truth of His words in supporting them by miracles; whereby He also proclaimed His Divine power. A strong presumption in favour of these may be found in the belief of the Apostles and disciples in the Divinity of their Master, a belief to which both the New Testament and the writings of the Apostolic Fathers bear witness.

Were we to remove the miraculous from the life of Christ we should never be able to explain the faith of that portion of the Jewish nation which recognised Jesus to be the "Messias." Amongst these were His disciples, and the multitude of the faithful who formed the rising Church. How was it that, in spite of the principle of cohesion in the Jewish race, so many Jews separated themselves from their nation? Who broke the charm of their hopes? Habitually Jesus acted as an ordinary man. He was weak, He allowed Himself to be jeered at, insulted, stoned, then seized, beaten

[1] "Der Geschichtlichte Christus," p. 109.

with scourges, and finally put to death. How would the Jews have been able to believe that Jesus was God, if they had not seen Him accomplish before their eyes the miracles of which the Gospels speak, and which carried conviction to them? The personal influence that Christ wielded over those who gathered around Him was wonderful. But, however remarkable the majesty of our Lord's bearing may have been, His disciples would never have taken Him to be either the Messias or God, if He had not been a Thaumaturgus. Strauss is scandalised that rough fishermen, attached to their home interests, should have followed Jesus Christ on the strength of a simple *sequere me*—"Follow Me." It was because Jesus was not only a good speaker, an eloquent moralist, and an honest man, but because He also declared that He was God, and proved His Divinity by marvellous prodigies.

When it is a question of the moral beauty of the character of Jesus Christ, the evangelical history meets with few opponents. It is only when miracles are related in the Gospels that their historical value is contradicted or disputed. It has been historically proved that the first generation of Christians believed Jesus to be a Thaumaturgus; that Jesus Christ performed extraordinary wonders and works, which, according to His own words, "no other had done before Him." The Gospel proclaims that Jesus verily sowed miracles along His path. The learned Ewald has declared that miracles were daily wrought by Jesus. We read in St. Matthew—"And Jesus went about all the cities and towns, healing every disease and every infirmity" (ix. 35). "And Jesus went through Galilee, curing all diseases and infirmities. And His fame spread throughout Syria. They brought unto Him those who were afflicted and tormented with diseases, and all kinds of sufferings; those who were possessed by devils, the epileptic and paralytic, and He cured them. Crowds of people followed Him from Galilee, Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and the countries beyond the Jordan." We read in St. John—"And although He performed so many miracles they did not believe in Him, and a great multitude followed Him because they saw the miracles which He did on them that were diseased" (vi. 2; xii. 37). And again—"Many of the

Jews who were come to Mary and Martha, and had seen the things that Jesus did, believed in Him." The Chief Priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said—"What do we, for this Man doth many miracles?" (John xi. 45-47).

With regard to these miracles we do not observe that any serious difference arose among the witnesses. Jesus Christ presents them as incontestable facts, and His adversaries do not contest them. They either deny His authority, or keep silence; or if they are compelled to answer, they evade the question by asking for prodigies of another kind. Towards the end of the ministry of Jesus Christ, having no longer any object in hesitating, they acknowledged them formally—"This Man performed great miracles," said Caiphas. Fifty days after Christ's resurrection Peter said to the Jews—"Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man approved of God among you, by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as you also know" (Acts ii. 22). "The same being delivered up by you . . . you, by the hands of wicked men, have crucified and slain" (Acts ii. 23). "This Jesus hath God raised again, whereof all we are witnesses" (Acts ii. 32). The Jews have frequently tried to equivocate on the subject of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, but they have never formally denied His miracles. In the fourth century the adversaries of Christianity opposed miracle to miracle. The reason of this was that the renown of the miracles performed by Jesus Christ rendered it impossible they should be contested. A simple denial would have been looked upon as a defeat. For the honour of philosophy, would it not have been more reasonable in them to have received our Lord's miracles with incredulity? The Christian writers of the first century, even those belonging to schismatical bodies, unanimously acknowledged the miracles of Jesus Christ. The author of the Epistle of St. Barnabas says that "Jesus Christ, in performing such great prodigies and miracles, has given Israel a striking proof of His love." Quadratus, the Athenian, who wrote under Trajan and Hadrian, declares that "the works of the Lord were striking and permanent in their effects, and that the lives

of several who were cured by Jesus were so prolonged that some of them have lived even to our times."[1] St. Justin speaks of the miracles of Jesus Christ as of certain facts recorded in the public acts—"He brought the dead to life; and calling them to life, He excited His contemporaries to recognise Him by the works He performed." Cerinthus, the heretic, said that "Jesus was born of Joseph and Mary, and that after His baptism the Christ descended upon Him under the form of a dove; He announced the unknown Father, and performed miracles." Marcion, the Gnostic, according to Tertullian, desired nothing but the miracles of Jesus Christ to prove His Divinity. Every document of the first century testifies to the truth of the miracles of Jesus Christ. We read in the "Recognitions"[2] of Clement, and in "The Clementine Homilies"[3] that during the reign of Tiberius there arose a Man, who, to prove that He was Divine, made the deaf to hear, the blind to see, and the lame to walk; that He cured all diseases—in a word, that there was nothing which He had not the power to do.

The miraculous character of the life of Jesus Christ stands out all the more clearly from the contrast in this respect between Him and St. John the Baptist. The Jewish historian Josephus speaks in a very detailed manner of John, while he devotes only one paragraph to our Lord. The preaching of John caused an immense sensation among the Jewish people. His disciples were widely dispersed. In the time of St. Peter some of them were to be found in Asia Minor. All the people were disposed to look upon John as the Messias. And yet neither his disciples, nor the people, nor Josephus have ever attributed to him a single miraculous event. The people of Berea, struck with this difference, are described in the Gospel as making the remark—"John indeed did no sign . . . but all things whatsoever John said of this Man were true" (John x. 41, 42). Let it not be said that it was when passing over pagan soil that the history of Jesus loaded itself with legendary amplifications. St.

[1] "Routh.," t. I., p. 75
[2] Liv. I., III., VIII.
[3] Hom. i.-lvi.

Matthew's Gospel is purely Jewish, and yet it contains as many miracles as the others. Besides, the four centuries which preceded the appearing of Jesus belonged to a period entirely void of Divine manifestations. How then could history have suddenly drawn the radiant figure of Jesus on a foundation so vulgar and prosaic? If there is no effect without a cause, something quite exceptional must have marked the passage of this personality upon earth.

It is, then, difficult to deny that the Apostles, the disciples of Christ, and the first Christians believed that Jesus performed miracles. Before they could have believed in His miracles, either these must have existed, or we must suppose that the men themselves were nothing but a mob of visionaries or impostors. There are statements in the writings of the Apostles which, without doubting their sincerity, one might feel inclined to question. "But," says M. Wallon, "miracles are not secondary things in the Gospels." They have a necessary connection with the evangelical history. They form the foundation of Christ's teaching, the proof of His mission, the condemnation of His adversaries, the occasion for examinations and disputes, and the explanation of various public and uncontested facts. To exclude them from the public history of Jesus Christ would be to render it inexplicable. Miracles enter so deeply into the construction of the Gospels that M. Rénan, the most aggressive enemy of the supernatural, admits that they cannot be eliminated from the history of Jesus Christ. "We must not," he says, "in this matter listen too readily to our repugnances, for we should in that case be tempted to raise objections to these miracles, and thus evade the objections which might possibly be urged against the character of Jesus, and suppress facts which, in the eyes of the contemporaries of Jesus, were of the first importance. It would be convenient to say that we have here only additions made by disciples who were so very inferior to their Master; but the four narrators of the life of Jesus are unanimous in vaunting His miracles." [1]

Besides, the sceptical are obliged to admit that Jesus is the Messias. They say—"It was believed that the Messias

[1] "Vie de Jésus," pp. 265, 266.

was to work miracles; then, as Christ did not perform any, some have perforce been attributed to Him, because it was believed He was the Messias.[1] This is to admit that Jesus was believed to be the Messias, which is an important avowal. The question then arises, How could the Jews have taken Him for the Messias if He did not perform miracles, when they were convinced that the true Messias would do so? The possibility of miracles does not involve their existence; while the existence of miracles involves the Divinity of Jesus, who wrought them to prove that which He proclaimed, to wit, that He was the Son of God. But Jesus worked miracles, *non in angulo*, as St. Peter says, but in public places and in the presence of crowds. Palestine, which was the scene of the wayside preaching of Jesus, was also the scene of His prodigies. Jesus Christ had a direct and unlimited power over nature. His miracles extended to all kingdoms. He is Master of the heavens, which announce Him to the world by a star, sent directly for this purpose; of the storms which He calms; of the impenetrable bodies through which He passes; of the substances which He changes; of the diseases He cures; of the hearts which He penetrates and softens; and of death, which He changes into life. He accomplishes all these prodigies, not as one sent, but "by His own power." He is Man, it is true; for He suffers, and He dies. But with each of His humiliations is allied some wonder that recalls His Infinite Majesty. "He is born," says Bossuet, "but is born of a Virgin. He eats: but, when it pleases Him, He does without mortal food, and has only the Will of His Father for nourishment; He commands His Angels to wait on Him; He sleeps, but while sleeping, prevents the boat from sinking; He walks, but at His command the sea becomes firm under His feet; He dies, but in dying He causes all nature to fear. Jesus does not perform miracles to satisfy either fancy or curiosity. They come more from His goodness than from His power. Although they are accomplished with sovereign authority, they take place without preparation; generally a single word of command rewards a reasonable faith. When the proofs which He has

[1] M. Havet, "Études d'histoire religieuse," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1re année, 1881, p. 587.

given are suspected, when a more original miracle than the one He has performed is required, when this desire becomes a matter of criticism, then Jesus conceals Himself. One day He had just performed a miracle. The Pharisees desired Him to show them a sign in the heavens; He refused. Herod, to test His power as a Thaumaturgus, caused Him to be brought to his palace. This monarch had assembled all his court, *cum exercitu suo!* Jesus retired completely within Himself. With regard to one of the incredulous and immoral towns of Decapolis, it is said—"And Jesus did there no miracles, because of their unbelief." After the Resurrection Jesus showed Himself to others, besides the Apostles, in the Holy City; He did not show Himself to His judges, because of their want of faith. The history of every religion abounds in miracles; but, in every one except the Christian, the miracles related are the contrivance of the founder to cause himself to be believed, or else the play of the imagination which delights in the marvellous. Nothing of this kind exists in the evangelical miracles. M. Guizot says that "the miraculous acts of Jesus were essentially simple, practical, and moral. He did not anticipate His miracles; He neither planned their working nor paraded them. They appeared when a pressing need or a natural occasion provoked them. When they were asked for with confidence, He accomplished them without ostentation, by right of His Divine mission. And, in performing them, He complained of the doubt and coldness with which He was received."[1] "Woe to thee, Chorozain! woe to thee, Bethsaida. For if in Tyre and Sidon had been wrought the miracles that have been wrought in you, they had long ago done penance in sackcloth and ashes!" And Jesus performed His miracles to prove His mission. They are not simply embroidery on the tissue of the evangelical history; they form part of the tissue itself. Ewald said that there would have been no evangelical history had it not been for the daily miraculous cures accomplished by Jesus. To the Jews, who accused Him of blasphemy, because He said "I am the Son of God," He answered—"If I do not the works of My Father do not believe Me;

[1] "Méditations sur l'essence de la religion chrétienne."

but if I do them, even though you should not believe Me, believe in the works, so that you may know and believe that My Father is in Me, and I am in My Father"! . . . And to His disciples—"Believe you not that I am in the Father and the Father in Me? Otherwise believe for the very work's sake"!

The chief aim of His miracles was not to demonstrate His teaching, but to draw attention to His person. They were not merely destined to relieve, but to save. They do not belong to the biography of such and such a contemporary of Jesus, who had been ill and was cured; but they belong to the grand history of the reign of God. In a word, they are signs—*σημεῖα.*

IV. Another proof of the Divinity of Jesus Christ is that He was expected. *Christus heri et hodie.* He had lived for a long time in the minds of the prophets and of the people. M. Rénan recognises, without hesitation, in his "Vie de Jésus," that the universal belief at the time of Jesus Christ was that the Messias should be born in Bethlehem, and should be of the house of David. Pascal declares that, to him, the prophetic proof was the strongest of all the proofs of Christianity. Jesus Christ is the corner-stone of the religious edifice of the Jews, and the last word in their history. He appears on every page, either under the veil of the facts which occur, or in the various features of the prophecies, that, when collected together, compose a most perfect portrayal of Him. His personality was indicated to our first parents, when driven from paradise, to temper the bitter remembrance of the happiness they had lost. Traditional faith in the Redeemer entered into the Ark along with the family of the just man Noah, and became afterwards the common patrimony of the people, who carried it to the four quarters of the world, but nowhere was it better preserved than among the children of Abraham. The national life and history of the Jews were figurative. There exists between the facts which preceded the coming of Jesus Christ, and those which followed it, a close connection which forces us to recognise the providential plan, conceived from the beginning. All the great personages of Israel represent, prophetically, our Lord Jesus Christ under some of His attributes.

Bossuet summed up this lofty teaching when he wrote—"Read the sacred Scriptures and you will everywhere see Jesus our Saviour mentioned. There is not a page wherein He is not found. He is in the Garden of Eden; in the deluge; on the Mount of Horeb; at the passage of the Red Sea; in the desert; in the Promised Land; in the ceremonies and sacrifices; in the Ark of the Covenant; and in the Tabernacle; He is everywhere, though only through types. The law is a hidden Gospel, the Gospel is the law explained."[1] Side by side with prophecy in act we have the "word of prophecy." A multitude of extraordinary personages proclaim the hopes of fallen humanity and the miraculous advent of a new order. So exact and luminous are these prophecies as to challenge the admiration of all who read them.

They said of the Messias that He is God and Man (Isa. vii. 14); that He will be of the race of Abraham and the blood of David (Gen. xxii. 18; Ps. civ. 9, 10, 42; cxxxi; Isa. xi. 1); that He will be born of a virgin in Bethlehem, when the sceptre shall have departed from Judah (Isa. vii. 14; Mich. v. 2; Gen. xlix. 10); that He will be presented in the second temple, built after the captivity (Mal. iii. 1); that He will be the expectation of the nations (Gen. xlix. 10; Isa. ix. 2; xi. 10); a King full of meekness (Isa. ix. 9; xvi. 1; lxii. 1); the Servant of His people whom He will redeem from death (Isa. ix. 27); truly God, although a hidden God (Isa. ix. 6; xlv. 15); that He will bring into the world a new law, and will prove it by miracles (Deut. xviii. 15-18; Isa. xxx. 18, 19, and xlv. lxi.; Jer. xxxiii. 14-19); that He will be betrayed by one of His disciples and sold for thirty pieces of silver (Zech. xi. 12, 13); that He will suffer all kinds of insults in His passion, will be crowned with thorns and nailed to the cross; that His hands and feet will be pierced (Isa. i. 6; liii. 2; Ps. xxi); that He will taste gall and vinegar (Ps. lxviii. 22); that He will be put to death in the seventieth week (of years) after the edict ordering the rebuilding of Jerusalem (Dan. ix. 23, etc.); that His clothes shall be divided, and upon His vesture they will cast lots (Ps. xxi. 19); that He will triumph over death, and will arise living

[1] Sermon on "The Character of the Two Covenants."

from the tomb, henceforth glorious, and the people of the earth will come to adore Him (Isa. xxxv. 10; Dan. vii. 27; Ps. lxxi. 17, *et seq.*); He will send His spirit upon His disciples (Joel ii. 28; iii. 16); and will convert the universe, in drawing all things to Himself, by Divine and miraculous energy (Ps. xvii. 4; Isa. ii., xi., lv., lxv. 17; Jer. xx.; Mal. i., ii., etc.).

These prophecies are so clear that they can only be applied to the Messias, and in them their highest details have been realised. It is very evident that there exists between these texts of the Old Testament and the life of Jesus Christ, as it is set forth in the Gospels, a really astonishing coincidence. This caused Strauss to say—"The Gospel ordinarily states that all these things were done in order that the prophecies might be accomplished. But substitute for this the words 'all this was *related* so that the prophecies might be accomplished.'" With a like object he remarks that Jesus Christ "formed Himself upon the descriptions of the prophets." Jesus, according to Strauss, knew the Scripture texts thoroughly, and He devoted His whole life to the realisation of the ideal Messias.

Catholics believe that there were true prophecies, not allegorical ones, concerning Christ and His work, and they affirm that these prophecies were made use of in the New Testament to prove that Christ was the Messias who was announced and expected.[1]

It was a custom among the Jews to search out proofs from the Holy Scriptures, and especially from the prophecies, for the purpose of settling all controversies concerning the Messias, and every point connected with Him. There was at that time among the Jews a national tradition, the tradition of the synagogue. All the Jews knew Hebrew, and texts which to us may be obscure were perfectly clear to them. As regards ourselves in the nineteenth century, we are affected only by the general tenor of the prophecies. To the Jews the whole of them were a strong proof, the strongest of any. The writers of the New Testament would indeed have been rash in not following up this tradition. The prophetic argument is not one for theologians.

[1] See on this point the learned argument of Patrizzi, "De Evang. libri tres."

It was discussed at the time of Christ, before any one was convinced that Jesus was the Messias.

The first preachers of the Gospel appealed frequently in their discourses to the prophets and to the Scriptures. We gather this from many chapters in the Acts of the Apostles. Thus, Peter appeals to this kind of argument when it is a question of choosing another Apostle to take the place of Judas (Acts i. 16-20); when he wishes to prove to the Jews the truth of his declarations on the Resurrection of Jesus (Acts ii. 25, etc.); in representing Christ's ascending into heaven and sitting on the right hand of the Father (Acts ii. 33-36); when he shows that the Apostles were filled with the Holy Ghost (Acts ii. 16-20); when he declares that Christ "ought to have suffered" that which He endured (Acts iii. 18); that we should believe in His words and accept His doctrine (Acts iii. 22, etc.). Philip the deacon also appeals to the prophecies when he explains the Christian mysteries to the minister of the Queen of Ethiopia (Acts viii. 35). James, too, in insisting on Peter's testimony before the nations, sets himself to show how the prophecies are fulfilled (Acts xv. 15, etc.). Apollo shows by the Scriptures that the Messias is Christ Jesus (Acts xviii. 28). Paul also appeals to them, both in the synagogue and at Antioch (Acts xiii. 23, 46, 47); and, again, at Rome (Acts xxviii. 23). Now, if those who preached the Gospel employed these arguments, shall we dare to say that those who wrote the Gospel did not likewise make use of them?

Among the numerous proofs which we might borrow from the sacred authors in support of this thesis, we will only adduce one. John, telling how, in company with Peter, he had visited the sepulchre of Christ, says of himself—"Then that other disciple also went in who came first to the sepulchre, and he saw and believed." And John adds these words—"For as yet the disciples knew not the Scripture that He must rise again from the dead" (St. John xx. 8, 9). John thought, therefore, that there existed prophetic proof of the resurrection to assure him of the fact, even before he believed it. If John believed this proof to be excellent, can it be said that the other New Testament writers regarded it as worthless?

Christ Himself offered the Jews evidence drawn from

the prophecies and the other Scriptures to prove that He was both God, and, at the same time, the Messias promised to their fathers. He declared to His Apostles—"Amen, I say to you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see the things that you see, and have not seen them, and to hear the things that you hear and have not heard them" (St. Luke x. 24; Matt. xiii. 17). "For if you did believe Moses" (He told them), "you would perhaps believe Me also; for he wrote of Me" (St. John v. 46). "How then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that so it must be done?" (St. Matt. xxvi. 54). And, further on—"Now, all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled (St. Matt. xxvi. 56; Mark xiv. 49). And, after the resurrection, He spoke to the disciples at Emmaus—"O foolish and slow of heart, to believe in all things which the prophets have spoken!" (St. Luke xxiv. 25). And to the Apostles—"These are the words which I spoke to you while I was yet with you, that all things must needs be fulfilled which are written in the law of Moses and in the prophets and in the psalms concerning Me." Seeing that some of His disciples are beginning to mistrust Him, Christ does not remind them of the miracles He wrought before them, but of the words of the prophets (St. Luke xxiv. 27). Now, at this period, Christ had not yet given His disciples the understanding of the Scriptures, and those to whom He addressed this reproach could not, therefore, understand an argument drawn from prophecy, save in virtue of the interpretation established by Jewish doctors. Consequently, if Christ makes an appeal to the prophecies, we cannot deny that the authors of the New Testament may have acted in like manner.

No one, therefore, will dispute the fact that the New Testament writers in their books, and the Apostles in their preaching, strove to persuade both Jews and Gentiles to accept Christ as the Saviour promised to the human race. No more solid argument could be proposed to the Jews than that of prophecy. This argument is, indeed, still the most powerful we can use in dealing with that people. Grotius replies that it was sufficient for the Apostles "to appeal to the miracles and the resurrection of Christ; if that did not succeed in convincing the Jews, then

nothing would." Though, however, the Jews saw the miracles of Christ yet they did not believe in Him. Neither did they believe the Apostles when they announced His resurrection to them, or when they wrought in their presence miracles similar to those of Christ.

The conclusion is clear. If the contemporaries of Jesus had not admitted that the Messias was foretold in the Old Testament, the preaching of Jesus Christ and His Apostles would have been without point. If Jesus proclaimed Himself to be the Messias—if the Apostles pointed Him out as such—we must believe them. Criticism may do its best, yet it will not succeed in doing away with either the prophecies, or their fulfilment in Jesus Christ, or the faith and expectation of an entire nation.

In any case it is an undisputed fact that the prophecies were anterior to the establishment of Christianity, and that no natural cause could, at the time of their composition, have given the slightest intimation of the grand revolution to be wrought in the world by Jesus Christ. Therefore if an event so unforeseen, so important, both in itself and in its results, was for centuries the object of the expectation of the Hebrew nation and the foundation of the prophecies, we have herein an intervention manifestly supernatural and a decisive proof of the divinity of Christianity.

From whatever point of view we look, it is certain that Jesus proclaims Himself to be the authorised Interpreter of the Law and the Deliverer promised by the prophets of old. "The days of impartial science have come," says M. Schérer, "and I know not why we continue to evade the difficulty. It is not the less true that Jesus believed Himself to be the Messias, and gave Himself out as such; and that that day was the critical day, that fact the leading fact in the history of His thoughts. This is the meaning we must attribute to His mission; this the point of view from which we must regard Him, if we wish to understand His life and teaching. Jesus proclaimed Himself to be the Messias. Now, who is this Messias? The Messias is the Deliverer whom Jehovah promised to send to His people; He is the superhuman Personage whose characteristics were delineated and set forth by prophecy and revelation during the seven centuries preceding His advent. He is

the King who was to come and raise the dead, judge mankind, and reinstate the Jews at the head of the nations; who is to reign over them eternally, and establish for ever upon earth Jehovah's kingdom of truth and justice. This fact we must grasp if we are to understand the relations of Jesus to the beliefs of the Old Testament, the place occupied by Him in the annals of His nation, the part He fulfils in the religious history of mankind, the accomplishment of the messianic prophecies. This gives us the key to the life of Jesus, and explains why a consideration of the idea and the destiny of the Messias forms an indispensable introduction to the biography of the Founder of Christianity."[1] We have here an avowal of considerable weight from the mouth of such a sceptic as M. Schérer.

V. There is yet another fact distinctly recognised by our adversaries, namely, that the moral law of Jesus is admirable, and the doctrine preached by Him sublime. "Evangelical morality is the highest creation which has issued from the conscience of man, and the first code of perfect life which any moralist has drawn up."[2]

Upon a given day the light of the Gospel arose upon the world; before it all other lights paled and none other has arisen to surpass it. Nothing can be compared to those marvellous parables in which the highest teaching is hidden under the veil of metaphor. Our adversaries are very willing to grant this, but they have ends of their own in view. By allowing Jesus still to wear the mantle of a philosopher they hope to deprive Him of the nimbus of His Divinity. They load Christianity with professions of respect and admiration, but the more they extol it, the more they pretend to see in it nothing beyond the elaboration of human thought, attaining, by its own efforts, to the sublimest expression of religious feeling. Incredulous admirers of this kind maintain, moreover, that some of the maxims now found in the Gospel were set forth long before the time of Christ by the philosophers and sages of antiquity, by Plato, Confucius, and Sakia-Mouni the Buddha. In the

[1] Schérer, *Le Temps*, 14th July and 11th August, 1863.
[2] "Vie de Jésus," p. 84.

name of evolution our antagonists assail Christianity with those ideas and sentiments of the ancient Gentile world which bore some analogy to its doctrines. We do not absolutely contradict them on this point. The moral law does not profess to date from Jesus. Two thousand years before Him Moses promulgated the Decalogue to the Jewish people. The rabbis of Israel set forth in their writings admirable precepts of charity and justice. The moral law of the Pentateuch, especially, is sublime. The entire nineteenth chapter of Leviticus should be read and re-read. It is from this source that the sages of pagan antiquity drew their inspirations. Porphyry says expressly that Pythagoras consulted the Hebrews. We might find numerous analogies between our Sacred Books and the writings of the most ancient philosophers of India, China, and Persia.[1] There is also the primitive revelation to be considered, without which it would be difficult to explain how the moral law is found to be almost identical among races the most diverse one from another. But granting all this, what comparison exists between these writings and the Gospel, which breathes from beginning to end the purest morality? "As to the moral law of Jesus," says Barthélemy Saint Hilaire, "we may join with Bossuet in rendering homage to its incorruptible beauty."[2] What indeed shall we compare to humility, that unique virtue of Christianity, one so essentially its own? . . . What is there comparable to the grand law of universal charity which God so continually enforced upon His disciples as that which should distinguish them from other men?" "A new commandment I give unto you: That you love one another, as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love one for another." "It was said to them of old, thou shalt not kill. And whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment! But I say to you, that whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment! If therefore thou offer thy gift at the altar, and there thou remember that thy brother hath anything against thee, leave there thy offering before the altar, and go first to be

[1] See Abel Rémusat's "Mémoires sur Lao-Tseu."
[2] *Journal des savants*, Sept., 1892.

reconciled to thy brother! You have heard that it hath been said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth!' But I say to you not to resist evil; but if one strike thee on the right cheek, turn to Him also the other. You have heard that it hath been said, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies; do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you: that you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven, who maketh His sun to rise upon the good and bad, and raineth upon the just and unjust. Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect![1] You have heard that it was said to them of old, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery.' But I say to you that whosoever shall look on a woman to lust after her hath already committed adultery with her in his heart." We do indeed meet with, among ancient writers and elsewhere, some beautiful maxims about chastity. But nowhere before Christ was the virtue of chastity inculcated with that delicacy of observance which Christianity imparts to it. By this Law our thoughts, even, must be guarded and restricted.

We are told to set a guard, not on the gates of our senses merely, but even upon the entrance to our heart. This doctrine of absolute purity, this passion for chastity, is an original feature in Christian morality. According to the moral law of the Gospel Jesus wills that the soul should reign over the body, the spiritual over the animal nature. Real temptation, compromising our future destiny, arises in the animal part of our nature. This doctrine is not found in other religions. Neither do we find elsewhere an Agnes, and many other young maidens, martyrs of chastity, who preferred the most dreadful torments to the slightest stain upon their virginity. Finally, nowhere before Christ do we find the love of God inculcated; that positive, practical, heartfelt love which Christians have for God. God was never loved before the time of Jesus, or at least not in the same manner as He has since been loved. True mysticism

[1] M. de Lanessan, in a recent book on "Chinese Morality," dares to write that "charity was invented by the Chinese, and moreover by Meng-Tsen alone." M. de Lanessan has not read the Gospels carefully, otherwise the formulas of what he terms the "purest western morality" would not be Chinese to him.

began with Christianity. Again, where in the writings of philosophers do we find anything equal to the teaching of the beatitudes, by which Jesus Christ commenced His public ministry? "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the meek: for they shall possess the land. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice sake: for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." What words are these! It is easy to think how they revolutionised mankind when heard for the first time. The Sermon on the Mount suffices, by itself, to show the originality of Christ as a moralist. Never has the world before or since heard anything like it.

Jesus Christ as a moralist was novel and original, not only because He taught new things, but because He proposed the future life as the sanction of the moral law.

Hard is the task He imposes upon man in this world, but He encourages him by promises of a better life. And this future life is not set forth with the hesitation and ambiguity of an ordinary philosopher, but with the assurance of One who knows well the other world. This assurance of a life to come, this perpetual care for the soul of man, distinguishes Jesus Christ from all other great religious thinkers. These men enshrine themselves as it were in systems of philosophy. Their sole endeavour is to teach man how to spend this life well, for the life to come involves, in their eyes, only a heavy risk. With Jesus eternity is everything. The destiny of man forms the subject of His teaching. We can see that He speaks of heaven as of His own country, whence He came, and as one who knows it well. "If thy eye scandalise thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee!" "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul? Or what exchange shall a man give for his soul?" This faith and this solicitude for eternity manifest themselves in Jesus in another conspicuous trait, namely, His love of prayer. He is convinced of the power of prayer, and He prays like one of the neediest of men. Nothing is more extraordinary than this prayerful spirit of Jesus. After performing His greatest miracles, He passed whole

nights in prayer. Crowds were drawn to Him and wished to follow Him, but instead of reciprocating the attention of the multitude, He retired into solitude to betake Himself to prayer. To the Apostles, who thought of earthly instead of heavenly food, He said—"I have food which you know not of. My meat is to do the will of My Father." Plato and Mahomet strongly recommended prayer, and they practised it themselves. But they did not do this as our Lord did, they took pride in their recommendations. They rarely prayed in reality, and when they did so it was not as an act of adoration for its own sake. Jesus loved prayer as such. When He prayed He was sure of being heard. He advised His Apostles to pray—"Watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation. You ought always to pray and not to faint."

We cannot meditate deeply upon the personality of Jesus, so simply and truthfully put before us by the evangelists, without being struck by the absolutely unique character of the relations that this Man maintained with God during His whole life. God had upon the earth, before Jesus came, faithful and devoted servants and agents; such as Abraham, Moses, Elias, and others. Yet how wide was the difference between the relations of these men with the Eternal One and those of Jesus with His Father! When at the age of only twelve years He presented Himself in the temple, He felt at once that He was in His Father's House. His confidence bore the impress of tenderness and filial assurance. Abraham has his days of distrust; Moses, his bitter and even rebellious moments; Elias, his hours of self-will, when he seeks to avoid danger by following the dictates of his own heart. When Elias performed his greatest miracle—the raising to life of the widow's son—it was at the cost of a physical and mental strain which betrayed the magnitude of the effort. With Jesus all is sweet, calm, and natural. In raising Lazarus He declared with the peace of a well-assured conviction—"Father, I know that Thou hearest Me always!" Later on, when forsaken by His disciples, He exclaimed—"I am not alone, because the Father is with Me." We have here a special feature, which distinguishes the piety of Jesus from that of all other men, as His worship differs from that of every

other. Thus, Jesus never speaks in the same words of His own relationship to His Father and that of those associated with Him. He does not say "our Father" or "our God," in speaking of Himself and His disciples together He says, "My Father and your Father, My God and your God." If, in the Lord's Prayer, He uses the expression "Our Father," it is after having said, "When ye pray, say Our Father." He is at the time putting words into the mouth of His disciples, and not speaking for Himself. "In My Father's house," He says, "there are many mansions." "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." No human being had ever dared to speak thus of God. The philosophers referred to God as the result of reasoning. To them He was a being deduced from their logic. To Jesus God was present as a Person whom He saw, a Reality with whom He was profoundly acquainted.

What, however, is of real importance is not the power to formulate beautiful moral maxims, but to apply them. Before Jesus came, no religion or philosophy had ever really given to the world what He gave. The age of the highest aspirations was precisely that of the most fundamental and shameful impotence. It is more than doubtful whether Hillel, even if he could have discovered unassisted the maxims of Christ, could have imbued them with the efficacy that Christ gave to them. "Jesus alone," says M. Rénan, "has expressed them with real efficacy." "Individuality of character did not exist, any more than did justice and charity, except in the lofty writings of subtle philosophers. I willingly admit that Jesus did not originate all these sublime sayings, but He discovered the art of engraving them on the heart." [1] Let the neo-Christians compare His morality with that of various religious and philosophical systems; let them trace in history the course of its amazing power; let them consider its deeds at the present day, and they will see that, thanks to it, their grandest dreams of tenderness and devotion have been realised for eighteen centuries by thousands of simple and teachable souls! It is an obvious and universally allowed fact, that Christianity has in all ages given birth

[1] Père Didon, "Jésus Christ."

to the sublimest virtues and the most heroic devotion, which, teaching man the practice of interior affection and the necessity of sacrifice, has so filled him with the love of self-denial as to constrain him to dedicate himself to it body and soul. Such acts of heroism and devotedness find in the natural order no explanation; the Divine character shines forth in them, and in them unprejudiced eyes perceive an everyday miracle. If this morality was identical with that of the ancient philosophers, one cannot explain how it was that the influence in their case was of quite an ordinary kind, confined to a few disciples and to the precincts of a particular school, whereas the doctrine of Jesus profoundly stirred the minds of His contemporaries, and spread itself, after His death, with incredible rapidity, to the four corners of the earth.

Those who deny the Divine origin of Christianity have completely failed to explain, by natural causes, the superiority of the evangelical doctrine over all that preceded or followed it. Let them tell us how it is that Jesus always attracts to Himself the slaves of sin and death here below, who, feeling the weight of their chains, exclaim, with St. Paul—"Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" The influence that Jesus has succeeded in obtaining amazed Napoleon, to whose keen intellect nothing appeared astonishing. "He achieved," according to this great conqueror, "the union of each human soul with His own."[1]

We have every right, then, to conclude that Christian morality is absolutely original. But the difficulty is not a little increased, while the miracle is made all the greater, by the impossibility of explaining whence Jesus and His Apostles learnt their doctrine if they were not the authors of it. And, if they were its authors, how can we explain their being so without a miracle? Jesus was brought from the ranks of the people. Employed in handicraft at an early age, and living always among working men, He possessed no human learning, and belonged to none of the sects or schools then known. His fellow-citizens were astonished that the Son of Mary proved to be so well instructed in the Scriptures, and inquired among themselves

[1] "Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène."

whence came His learning and wisdom. When in His thirtieth year Jesus appeared as a Teacher, His friends were amazed, and said—"Is not this the Son of Joseph?" (Luke iv. 22). And, later on, after His return from the Feast of Purim—"How came this Man by His wisdom and miracles? Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not His Mother called Mary, and His brethren James and Joseph, and Simon and Jude? And His sisters, are they not all with us? Whence, therefore, hath He all these things?" (Matt. xiii. 54-56). Thus spake His neighbours. The scholars said—How doth this Man know letters, having never learned?" (John vii. 15). Jesus was not a Jewish teacher; He was not of the school of Hillel. If the Gospel is not divine, let it be shown from what source it was drawn by Jesus and His disciples! Our opponents cannot agree upon this point. Jacolliot tells us that "Christianity came from India"; Burnouf declares it to be "of Persian origin, proceeding from the doctrines of the Zenda-vesta"; Havet maintains that "it is a development of Hellenism"; while Strauss, Baur, and Rénan inform us that it "took its rise from the Jewish religion"! "I have studied," says M. Brunetière, "all the recently popular books, in which we eagerly sought for a solution of our doubts, and what have they finally proved? The Hellenists expressly undertook to show us a complete Christianity contained in the Greek and Roman philosophies. But they have forgotten the main point, which is to inform us, if the whole of Christianity was contained in Hellenism, why it did not show its parentage." Here, however, lies the pith of the question; and, when in the works of Marcus Aurelius, or in the "Manual of Epictetus," we recognise, one after another, the "scattered clauses" of the Sermon on the Mount, except on those points on which the eminently aristocratic spirit of Stoic philosophy was, to speak the truth, in direct opposition to that of the Gospel, it still remains true and ever will remain so, that the Sermon on the Mount has conquered the world, and that neither the "Manual" nor the "Reflections" have contributed anything to this result. The Hebraists also promised to dispel for us all that was "irrational" or "improbable" in the history of the origins of Christianity, or of the chosen people. They would need

to prove the Bible to us to be nothing more than an ordinary book; and yet it is undoubtedly due to the Bible that their systems, as numerous as they are arbitrary, have come into collision with each other. Very far from having "exposed" the "unreasonable" or the "improbable" in Christianity, their exegesis has thoroughly confirmed it, since, even in the history of Buddhism, the analogies from evolution which it professed to have discovered, have failed to serve them under a closer and more careful scrutiny. Have we not met with Orientalists who maintain that Sakia-Mouni, the Buddha, was probably only a solar myth? And if they were to succeed some day in proving this contention, what would become of the resemblance which they have so often sought to establish between Jesus and Buddha?[1] "To every well-balanced mind," said Charles Magnin, "the Gospel bears in itself the most striking evidence of its heavenly origin."

After this no one can seriously maintain that Jesus Christ was "only a moralist and a philosopher." His own words confound mere human wisdom—"I confess to Thee O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones!" (Matt. xi. 25). He thus shows that He made light of the wisdom of the philosophers, and did not seek to convince by human reason. Jesus denounced, with anathemas, that which all mankind had hitherto worshipped, namely, pleasure, wealth, and honour, falsely so called. He exalted, by the power of His word, that which they had contemned, such as weakness, poverty, tears, and suffering. He went straight to the root of the evil, and, since the soul is corrupted by pride, covetousness, and lusts of every kind, He commended and enjoined humility, indifference to earthly things, purity, and trust in Providence. And, further, all this is contained in the Gospel, and we cannot separate this divine morality from it.

Evangelical ethics avail nothing if they do not include the morality of sacrifice and of the Cross. The doctrine of the Cross is only an heroic chimera, if its foundation does not rest on the Divine life and death of Him who preached

[1] "Après une visite au Vatican," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1st Jan., 1895.

it. The life that Jesus Christ led gave Him that right to speak, which He exercised, as Master of human nature and human wills, and as the God-Man. Jesus requires faith, without reasoning or disputing—"Did not I say to thee, that if thou believe, thou shalt see the glory of God?" (John xi. 40). The philosophers, instead of demanding faith, appeal to the reason of their disciples, or of their opponents in order to convince them. M. Rénan himself admits this. He speaks of Jesus as "an illiterate peasant"; is not this to acknowledge that Jesus did not profess to have the learning or the culture of the schools?

In short, from a purely reasonable point of view, it is not probable that a philosopher would become the founder of a religion or a man of deeds. He who argues for and against, who criticises and dissects systems, who devotes himself to discussing on every point, is a sceptic. It is the least favourable condition of all for developing that energy of action which characterises every religious founder.

It is for this reason that the system of evolution which seemed at first sight, on the ground of the history of religions, a formidable antagonist, fails completely when confronted with the Bible, and cannot live in the light of intelligent investigation. The similarities and contradictions among various creeds have given rise to the opinion that all are alike good; whereas, in point of fact, so many different religions can only exist because one of them affirms what another denies. On the opposite hypothesis there should be but one religion; "Yes" and "No" cannot be predicated of the same thing. Were all religions untrue, what are we to think of the wisdom of God, who can govern mankind only by means of contradiction and falsehood? Nor can it be maintained that all agree in fundamentals but differ only in non-essentials. The monstrous inventions of paganism, with its human sacrifices and other loathsome rites, are outrages upon reason. Further, if Jesus Christ is God, is it immaterial that the Jews crucified Him? If He is not God is it to be tolerated that Christians should adore Him? If He is present in the Eucharistic species, is He there to receive the insults of unbelievers? If He is not there can Catholic idolatry be sufficiently reprobated? If the Gospel is the

work of God are we permitted to mutilate it? If it is the work of man, it is childish to seek in it for the rule of faith or of conduct. To say that the religious sentiment can embrace with full content articles of faith which either contradict each other or are subject to change, is to forbid religion to lay claim to that very object which it seeks. It is to make it believe that it is always liable to be mistaken, even when it feels most secure.

Evolution in religion is uncertainty—an uncertainty which contains the germ of universal scepticism. And, indeed, the truth of our religion ought to be dearer and surer to us than even our own mother's identity. "There are only two kinds of rational men," says Pascal, viz., "those who love God with their whole hearts, because they know Him; and those who seek God with all their hearts, because they do not yet know Him." "Nothing suits nature better than the system of evolution," writes the Abbé de Broglie, "it is an excellent solace for the indolent which at once exempts them from seeking for the truth, or from obeying it, or from contesting it. We are not compelled by it to plunge ourselves into ecstatic contemplation, we can steer clear of weak-minded delusions, and are at the same time set free from the exclusive yoke of particular dogmas. Knowing beforehand that each creed esteems itself highly, released at one blow, and by a single word, from every great problem, those who have adopted the theory of evolution select from each religion that which appears to them good and useful, and reject all that imposes any restraint. Each one worships the sort of God who best suits him, thus inaugurating the reign of universal toleration and a community of error, and regarding the learned philosophers and the prophets of every age and every country with equal veneration or equal contempt, according to their individual character. This dogmatic toleration amounts to absolute infidelity."[1]

VI. Those who are prejudiced against the Church have, it is true, criticised these lofty doctrines, and have accused them of weakening individual energy. They have said that the Christian religion, by extolling meditation, by

[1] "La transcendance du christianisme."

accounting the highest good to consist in contempt of self and of earthly things, enervates society, and tends to place the government of the world in the hands of evil-doers.[1]

Such is the reasoning of M. Duruy in his "Roman History," when, following the argument of Gibbon, he so bitterly accuses Christians of having "consigned to the grave the genius of Rome," and Christianity of having "destroyed the ancient virtues."[2] One is amazed that men who claim to be intellectual and well-informed should thus mutilate the Christian doctrine. Undoubtedly the Gospel subordinates all human feelings and affections to the future life. The hope of heaven is a part of Christian dogma. But one must not leave in the background another side of its teaching, which commands that the greatest respect should be paid to the ruling powers, accompanied by an ardent desire that justice and charity should reign throughout the world. This is pre-eminently a social doctrine. The true Christian is not a seditious or a quarrelsome man; from the point of view of social peace there is no better citizen than he, and the noblest minds have so regarded him. The very nature of true Christian faith in an unseen object implies manly vigour in him who possesses it. We cannot believe spiritual truth in an intelligent manner without a firm masculine will. A man who has strength of will on one point is seldom devoid of it upon others. We are all naturally sceptical; if, then, we attain true faith in the future life, and believe that God will judge all our actions, should not this produce a good effect upon our conduct? The practical Christian will be, as a consequence of his faith, a good parent, and also a good

[1] Machiavelli, "Discours sur la première décade," Liv. 1er.

[2] "Christianity ruined emperors," says Musset, "but it saved the people. It opened the gates of Constantinople to the barbarians, but at the same time it opened the doors of the abodes of poverty to the consoling messengers of Christ. It touched also the great ones of the earth! And of what momentous interest are the dying struggles of an empire, corrupt to the core; the melancholy galvanism, by means of which the skeleton of tyranny still writhed on the tombs of Heliogabalus and of Caracalla! A fine thing to preserve, truly—the mummy of Rome, embalmed with the perfumes of Nero, and swathed in the shroud of Tiberius! The question was, O politicians, how to go and seek out the poor, and tell them to live in peace! The point was to leave the worms and the moles to destroy the monuments of shame, but to evolve from the bosom of the dead mummy a virgin as beautiful as the Mother of the Redeemer—the hope—the friend of the oppressed."—"La confession d'un enfant du siècle," t. II.

citizen. Does not Christianity train men to aspire to all that is excellent? What are the words of St. Paul? "For the rest, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever modest, whatsoever just, whatsoever holy, whatsoever lovely, whatsoever of good fame, if there be any virtue, if any praise of discipline, think on these things" (Phil. iv. 8). While elsewhere he says—"In all things show thyself an example of good works, in doctrine, in integrity, in gravity, the sound word that cannot be blamed; that he who is on the contrary part may be afraid, having no evil to say of us" (Titus ii. 7, 8). When St. Paul speaks thus he sets forth the Christian ideal. With such an ideal before him, a private individual may attain to a lofty morality, and become, in consequence, an excellent citizen, unless we are to suppose that the virtues of the citizen are antagonistic to those of the private individual, which is of course irrational.

Mgr. Perraud replied thus to M. Duruy's reproaches—"I could prove at once, and alas! very easily, that it would not tend to social peace to sever men from the hope of a future life, and confine them exclusively to the business and pleasures of this world. I remember having read on a mediæval tombstone a Latin epitaph, in which a beautiful and touching thought was concealed under a kind of play of words—*Non solum, sed cælum*—'I have desired heaven and not earth.' At the present day, in the name of an inflexible logic, those who labour, who suffer, and no longer believe in anything, reverse this saying. With threats on their lips, and often with weapons in their hands, they exclaim—'Heaven is a blank; give us the earth! and if it is refused to us, we will take it by force.' *Non cælum, sed solum!* I would also vindicate the Gospel from the charge of having inspired Christians with contempt for their rights and neglect of their duties. Ours, sir, and I say it emphatically, is the proud protest urged by St. Paul against the injustice and the shame of a tyrannical sentence—'It is not lawful for you to scourge me; I am a free-born Roman citizen.'

"This is not an isolated and unsupported rejoinder: it is based upon a principle; it has established a precedent, of which we to this day reap the advantage

and the credit. Far from being indifferent to our common rights as citizens, we never cease to seek in them our surest guarantees against the denial of just claims and the framing of exceptional laws. Should we then be less solicitous to fulfil the obligations which bind us to our country? To act thus would be to violate one of the most explicit precepts of the Gospel. For, indeed, the Master, whom to serve is our glory, has enjoined upon us the strict duty of 'rendering to Cæsar that which is Cæsar's, and to God that which is God's.'" [1]

The same Apostle who so energetically claims the title and prerogatives of a Roman citizen, reminds all Christians that they are conscientiously bound to pay to all lawful authority the threefold debt of "reverence, tribute, and custom." And, moreover, the Christian history of the times after Jesus Christ has produced matchless instances of patriotism, manliness, justice, and charity. A hundred years ago it was one of the favourite arguments of infidelity that a Christian could not be a good citizen, for he was bound, under pain of being disloyal to the Gospel, to submit to every injustice in uncomplaining silence. St. Paul points out to us that there is a time to endure and a time to resist, a time to be silent and a time to speak. Where can we find a bolder assertion of the rights of citizenship than in his address to the gaoler who was ordered to release him —"They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men that are Romans, and have cast us into prison: and now, do they thrust us out privately? Not so, but let them come and let us out themselves. And the serjeants told these words to the magistrates. And they were afraid, hearing that they were Romans" (Acts xvi. 37, 38). Another time Paul had been put to the torture. "After they had bound him with thongs, he said to the centurion who stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned? which the centurion hearing, went to the tribune and told him, saying, What art thou about to do? for this man is a Roman citizen. And the tribune coming, said to him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? And he said, Yea. And the tribune answered, I obtained

[1] "Réponse de Mgr. Perraud au discours de M. Duruy," Acad. française, 20th June, 1885.

the being free of this city with a great sum. And Paul said, But I was free-born" (Acts xxii. 25-28). It is difficult to find a keener perception of the rights of the citizen than that which St. Paul possessed. Moreover, did there ever exist better subjects of the Empire than the Christians—even though hunted and persecuted by the Roman authorities? Where can we find, to the same extent as in the martyrs, the conviction of the inviolable dignity of conscience? Where does manliness exist equal to that of St. Ambrose when awaiting on the threshold of the Basilica the powerful Emperor imbrued with the blood of his subjects? Where can we find another monarch like St. Louis, whose lofty and upright policy inspired a page of history which is affecting even to the most furious enemy of Christianity?[1] Is the history of the Church anything else than the history of charity? Have we ever seen as much sincere benevolence practised by others as by the true disciples of Christ? Jesus said to them—"By this shall all men know that you are My disciples if you have love for one another." This saying of Jesus Christ has been fully verified; there is no true disciple of Christ whose ambition it has not been to alleviate all the suffering that he saw around him. The pagans—those wonderful artists and lovers of beauty—did not truly love the poor, the wretched, or the lowly; such is the testimony of all history. Who in the first centuries of our era sought out the wretched in squalid dens and in filthy prisons? Who bent over the suffering slave and the beggar? Who fed the famishing, clothed the ragged, visited the prisoners, nursed the sick, and buried the dead? And, later on, when at length the Church had obtained permission to exist, who founded so many almshouses, so many orphanages, so many refuges, wherein to receive and to cure all the woes of humanity, the hospitals, the various asylums, and the infirmaries for the aged? And, later still, who caused to spring from Christian soil the many thousands of homes for the sick poor? Who loved the leper sufficiently to clasp him in his arms? Who crossed the ocean to ransom the slave? Who originated the Sister of Charity, and, in our own day, the Little Sister of the Poor? How many

[1] Voltaire.

hospitals have been built in this century? What liberality has been displayed towards these institutions by persons anxious to save their souls! What eminent personages have become servants to the mean and needy! Thus does the Church carry on her Master's work. Every time a soul is comforted, or a pauper is clothed, or a calamity is averted, it may be said of the Church, as the poor said in speaking of a noble woman whom the Academy has recently decorated—"She is there!" Thus the Christian doctrine purifies and strengthens the conscience, wages war against selfishness and avarice, and secures order in the State by inculcating deference and obedience. These facts suffice to refute the false and unjust misconstructions of the enemies of Christianity.

VII. We will reply here to an objection which affects the person of Jesus Christ as much as His work. Certain unbelievers say—"It is impossible that God should have revealed Himself in Jesus Christ, because Jesus Christ has not been universally recognised as God." This is the objection of Maxime du Camp, "If Jesus Christ had passed through His earthly life," he says, "adorned by the brilliant star which crowns His brow to-day, the whole human race would have acknowledged Him as God, and would have fallen prostrate at His feet. But the nimbus descended upon Him only when His pilgrimage was ended, at the moment when He bowed His head upon the Cross and breathed His last."[1] Such an assertion takes for granted that God cannot reveal Himself except in an irresistible manner, repressing, along with liberty of faith, the possibility of merit. Besides, if from the standpoint of M. du. Camp it is inadmissible that God should have revealed Himself in Jesus Christ, because Jesus Christ has not been universally acknowledged as God, is it not at least as difficult to imagine how men of indubitable sincerity, notwithstanding opposition and persecution, notwithstanding all that was marvellous, and, at first sight, absolutely incredible in the doctrine of the death of the God-Man upon the Cross, should have been perfectly convinced of the Divinity of Him who was crucified, and

[1] M. du Camp, "Histoire et critique," pp. 231, 232.

should have instilled a similar conviction into the hearts of so many others? The division of opinion at the present day is worth nothing viewed in the light of facts. Neither those who admit the Christian verities, nor those who deny them, can really judge the facts. How is it that there have been, from the beginning, both violent opponents of Jesus Christ, and ardent admirers of Him who have followed Him to the death? There is always difference of opinion in historical criticism, the most indisputable facts may be variously interpreted. It is of no consequence to us that Voltaire and others unfortunately did not believe the Christian facts. What astonishes us in reading the Gospel is that Jesus Christ should have met with such vehement opponents as the Pharisees, since they all saw the same facts. Rationalists tell us that these are mere inventions, because, had they really taken place, the whole world would have been convinced. The Gospel narrative itself replies to so clamorous an assertion. Confronted with the miracle of the man born blind, some granted its truth, others denied it. *Et schisma erat inter eos*—"And there was a division among them." Nevertheless the miracle was apparent to all. In Acts iv. we read that the Apostles had just healed a lame man; the fact could not be disputed. Nevertheless their enemies said—"What shall we do to these men? Shall we put them to death?" Those who dispute the miracles of Christianity because they have not compelled the belief and submission of the whole world, ought to admit that the best authenticated miraculous events have not invariably produced faith, even in the bystanders, but, on the contrary, have always caused division. In general, rationalists admit that those who proclaimed the Christian facts believed those facts. How, if no such facts existed, could they believe in them? If Christianity is false, how is it that it has been believed and loved to the death? One could understand unanimity in reception or rejection; a division of mankind into convinced adherents on the one hand and vehement opponents on the other is inexplicable. Christianity alone exhibits this peculiarity, and thus affords an evidence of its divinity.

If all had believed the Christian religion, and if it had been neither disputed nor contradicted from the beginning,

would it not have appeared to possess the legendary character which it is vainly sought by some to ascribe to it to-day? The lofty tone of the martyrs replying to their judges convinces us that they would not have died for a myth. In the same way, when we read their writings, we perceive in them that ungarnished simplicity which is the surest mark of sincerity. It is incredible that they could have produced narratives such as they have bequeathed to us, if they had been the victims of an illusion, or if they had not been eye-witnesses of that which they related. Had they written forty or fifty years later, or had they not seen the Christ and the deeds He performed, they could not have written as they did. The discourses of Jesus, as the New Testament writers place them before us, give a very striking picture of Jewish social life and history at that period. It is impossible that such a recital could have come from any other than persons who had themselves lived amid these scenes. Besides, God wills that the heart must love Him before the mind can discern His truth. He has made that truth impressive, but not irresistible. Thus He produces the treasure of noble hearts, not the arrogance of lofty intellects. It is not true that those who are incredulous cannot help doubting. How many have there been among them to whom truth was not at first clear, and who could not then accept it, but who afterwards came to believe with a faith that enabled them to triumph over death? "Had they any proofs with which we are now unacquainted? Did they witness miracles, or did the dead rise from their graves to persuade them? No, they simply controlled their passions. Let sceptics now do the same and they will share our faith; that which triumphs over doubt is not magic, but virtue."[1] "Of what consequence is it to the truth of Christianity that its tenets are abstruse, if its evidences are incontestable; or that some men have not believed, if it has, nevertheless, convinced millions of minds, amongst whom have been many of the grandest intellects of the modern world? What does it matter to the truth that investigation should be necessary, that this should even be difficult, as long as it is conclusive? From the fact that Jesus Christ was not born at Rome does it follow

[1] De Cossoles, "Du doute."

that He was therefore not born at Bethlehem? And if Revelation is not written across the clouds, can it be denied that it is written in history? To employ argument against fact is the perpetually unfruitful effort of doubt."[1]

II.

We have considered Jesus in Himself; let us now consider Him in His work. The study of the work will enable us to judge better of the Worker. We must remember what was the state of the world at the moment when Christ appeared in it. The whole universe was sunk in an idolatrous religion protected by the laws of the Empire, firmly rooted in the customs of the people, and maintained by powerful priestly communities. Moreover, it was the height of the Augustan era—a classical age, when man's intellect shone with dazzling splendour. There were in those days matchless philosophers, historians, orators, and poets. Never had the art of war or the science of government been carried to so high a point. It was a time when, under the assaults of philosophy, the ancient pagan superstitions were crumbling into ruins. One does not treat Mythology as Ovid did in his "Metamorphoses," unless one no longer believes in it. We can easily realise that Virgil had lost all faith in the Olympian world. As to the mythological conceptions of Horace, they are mere rhetoric. About the same time Lucretius wrote his rationalistic poem on nature, identifying her laws, as is done at the present day, with the divine. The Epicureans sought to account for nature by the force that is inherent in the atom, as do our scientists of to-day. The Stoics professed to find in moral rectitude the power which enabled them to fulfil the laws of God; they were not far removed from our neo-Christians. It was necessary that the Gospel should be preached in the presence of matter-of-fact and sceptical Romans—masters of a formidable government; in the presence of inquisitive, scoffing Greeks; and of Jews who, having rejected the Messias, were now spread throughout the Empire, in a state of exasperation at the fall of their nationality, all of whom were suspicious or

[1] De Cossoles, "Du doute."

hostile witnesses. Even with the help of many incontestable proofs, faith was difficult of attainment, seeing that the mystery of Christianity gave occasion for mockery. Jesus Christ made this plain to all when He said—"Blessed is he that shall not be scandalised in Me." Then, when all the ancient superstitions were falling to pieces under the battering-ram of human reason, that which was most repugnant to the opinions of the men of the age lifted up its head and aspired to conquer the world! Was there ever such audacity, or rather such folly? Did the work of salvation ever meet with so many obstacles?

I. And, first, the Apostles were called upon to preach the evangelical doctrine before haughty, positivist, and sceptical Romans. We are told that the Roman was an amalgamated Empire, and that this amalgamation peculiarly assisted Christian teaching. No doubt the unity of the Roman Empire was an advantage to the Apostles, who could travel throughout the world more easily in consequence; Bossuet admits this. If the Roman Empire had been composed of small hostile nationalities, the conversion of the world would have been more difficult. But what remains certain is that, to the sedate and sceptical Roman, the doctrine of the Cross must have appeared the very height of absurdity. Let us take Pilate as an example. He asked Jesus—*Quid est veritas?*—"What is truth?" He was a well-informed Roman, and, therefore, thoroughly acquainted with the writings of the philosophers. To hear a Jew—a man of a despised race—declare Himself to be the "King of Truth," appeared to Pilate the most extravagant folly. Gallio affords another instance. We remember his reply to the Jews—"If they be questions of your law, I will not be judge of such things" (Acts xviii. 15). In the classics occur numerous passages proving the scepticism of the Romans. Ovid, Perseus, Juvenal, Lucan, Cicero, and the two Plinys, were all sceptics. Tacitus, who possessed an upright soul, was an unbeliever to the core. Before its diffusion throughout the Empire, the new doctrine was ridiculed by all the satirists—*Insanis Paule*, said Festus to St. Paul—"Paul, thou art beside thyself." Let us not object that the Romans were undeceived regard-

ing their mythology. Is it at all probable that men who had become disgusted with the fables which had held sway over them for centuries, and with the myths which, however ridiculous they might be, left them free to indulge their passions, should become enamoured of the "Folly of the Cross," *i.e.*, of an entirely new theory which demanded the relinquishment of all the joys of this world, and which concentrated its efforts upon preparation for a future life that appeared to them chimerical? What would they think of this new doctrine? The greater number of Romans would surely say—"This Jesus is a fanatic, who, having succeeded in throwing dust in the eyes of a few women, now expects to impose upon us!"

II. The Apostles also preached the same doctrine, "hard to understand, hard to practise," as Bossuet expresses it, before the scoffing Greeks. The Acts of the Apostles relate that St. Paul, after his arrival at Athens, disputed daily with those that met him. Both Epicureans and Stoics argued with him, and some of them said—"What is it that this word-sower would say?" But others said—"He seemeth to be a setter forth of new gods." One day they seized hold of him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying—"May we know what this new doctrine is of which thou speakest? For thou bringest in certain new things to our ears. We would know therefore what these things mean" (Acts xvii. 19, 20). "For all the Athenians and strangers that were there employed themselves in nothing else but either in telling or in hearing some new thing."[1] Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, began by making an appeal to human reason; then he preached the sublime doctrine of God the Creator. He passed on to the Son of God, and then to His Resurrection. The Greeks listened attentively to Paul's discourse concerning God: such teaching did not give them offence. When he spoke of Jesus Christ it was something new, and they still gave heed to him. But when Paul began to speak of the resurrection from the dead, that was enough. The Epicureans believed in annihilation, and the Stoics were agnostics. "And when they had heard of the resurrection

[1] At Athens the form of greeting was, "What is the news?"

of the dead, some indeed mocked, but others said, We will hear thee again concerning this matter."

It was to such men that the new doctrine was to be preached. Those among whom Christianity was likely to spread with readiness, since it responded to the aspirations of the times; those who, like M. Duruy, speak of the "Gospel preparation," imagine that Christianity was preached as a sublime epitome of philosophical dogmas. No doubt the Apostles preached the existence of God, but that was not the main point; before everything else, they preached "the foolishness of the Cross," declaring that a Galilean Jew, disowned, despised, and put to death by all the most enlightened of His own nation, was the Messias foretold by the prophets. They declared this Galilean to be the Son of God; they asserted that this Son of God so humbled Himself as to assume a human body and soul; that He died, and then rose from the dead by His own power. Such was the teaching of the Apostles. It is not probable that the Greeks and Romans were disposed to accept this story. There is nothing more difficult to believe than the doctrine of the Incarnation. After the lapse of nineteen centuries, there are still exalted souls who would gladly accept the Christian faith, but are deterred from doing so by this very mystery. Much more, then, must it have been so when the doctrine was new. In the present day our faith is helped by the prestige of a religion which has triumphed over the pagan world for nineteen hundred years. But at first only a handful of Jews declared that God had become Man and had suffered death. The satirists would naturally overwhelm the Apostles with jeers, for the Christian doctrine must have appeared to them as an old wives' fable — a mere legend or myth. Those fishermen must have been profoundly convinced to have dared to continue their mission. "The Jews require signs," exclaims St. Paul, "and the Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews indeed a stumbling-block, and unto the Gentiles foolishness; but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God." "For I judged not myself to know anything among you but Jesus Christ and Him crucified!" And can we not understand this intrepid

exclamation of St. Paul—"I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ"? "If you be reproached for the name of Christ, you shall be blessed; for that which is of the honour, glory, and power of God, and that which is His Spirit, resteth upon you. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or a railer, or a coveter of other men's things. But if as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this name!" (1 Peter iv. 14, 15, 16). Once again, then, it is not reasonable to suppose that faith could, to such men, have been an easy thing.

III. The Apostles were confronted not only by Greeks and Romans, but by the Jews, their most implacable enemies. Almost entirely annihilated, politically, Jewish nationality had taken refuge in religion, and on this subject there was no compromise with the Romans, who were masters of their country. In the eyes of a genuine Israelite there was no greater crime than to endanger the stability of Judaism, and it was precisely for this crime that Jesus was condemned to death. The fact that the Jews were scattered throughout the whole Roman Empire at the time when the Apostles commenced preaching the Gospel, greatly strengthens the historical evidences of Christianity. After the world had been opened out to commerce by Greek and Roman conquests, the Jews swarmed everywhere. It was in passing through the Jewish quarters established in the Empire that the Apostles reached the pagan populations. Jews were to be found at Antioch, at Lystra, at Iconium, at Derbe, at Corinth, and at Athens: these towns were filled with them. Rome alone contained 20,000 Jews, according to M. Rénan.

Suetonius relates that, in the time of Claudius, it was necessary to expel them from Rome—"Claudius expelled the Jews, who were incessantly making tumults at the instigation of Christ."[1]

"Many of them took the lead in the higher branches of commerce, and had considerable authority in the Roman world. Invariably faithful to the Law, they strove to attract disciples to the One true God. Their converts, the

[1] "Judæos, assidue tumultuantes, impulsore Christo, expulit."—Suetonius, "Life of Claudius," Chap. xxv.

Jews of the Gate, who, without being circumcised or incorporated into Judaism, admitted the dogmas of the Jewish faith, were very numerous. Juvenal gives us a picture of the begging Jewess, who, as she received charity from the Roman matron, "insinuatingly whispered into her ear a few maxims of the Law."[1] Horace often speaks of the Jews, and represents them to us as ardent and zealous bigots. From the commencement of their mission the Apostles everywhere encountered in them their most inveterate enemies. The preachers of the Gospel could not disseminate their doctrine secretly. They had been commanded to declare it to the Jew first, and we can imagine that they would need skilful arguments to convince their co-religionists. According to the Acts and the Epistles of St. Paul, we see that this Apostle addressed himself first to the Jews, before preaching to the Gentiles. He entered their synagogues and disputed with them. At Thessalonica he reasoned with them out of the Scriptures "for three Sabbath days,"[2] teaching them "that the Christ was to suffer, and to rise again from the dead, and that this is Jesus Christ whom I preach unto you" (Acts xvii. 2, 3). The Jews "received the Word with all eagerness, daily searching the Scriptures, whether these things were so" (Acts xvii. 11). Usually the Apostles found in the Jews their most formidable opponents. We see this in the narrative contained in the Acts, especially in what happened at Iconium. Paul and Barnabas had visited that town, and had there performed a notable miracle. The inhabitants were so astonished that they took the two Apostles for gods, and desired to offer sacrifice to them, but the Jews of the town persuaded the multitude that Paul and Barnabas were only sorcerers. At their instigation the mob dragged the two disciples outside the walls, and so maltreated them that Paul was left there for dead. The Jews had special ill-will against Paul, whom they regarded as a traitor and a deserter.

IV. And what was this new doctrine? "Theologically," says M. de Champagny, "it was a definite, absolute, and

[1] Sat. VI., 543-548.
[2] *Per tria sabbata.*

universal dogma. As opposed to polytheism, it was the principle of divine unity, and in antagonism to infidelity and indifference it taught the necessity of worship. Morally, it enjoined the acceptance of poverty, suffering, and painful self-sacrifice, instead of the luxury and love of pleasure, everywhere existing, everywhere adored. Socially, it demanded that the reign of inhumanity, which gave to the rich the right to make chattels of the slave and the poor, should give place to the reign of charity, which made the master the friend of his slave, the man of wealth the steward of the gifts of God, and the Sovereign the servant of his people."[1]

And who preached this doctrine? Not the Alexandrian Jews, who understood Greek, and read the writings of the philosophers; not even the Doctors of the Law, but twelve poor fishermen, Galileans, natives of a province in disrepute at Jerusalem;[2] "fishmongers," as Voltaire ironically calls them. These twelve illiterate men, of rugged speech, boldly challenged the religion of the Cæsars. It was such men as Simon, the fisherman; Matthew, the publican; and the poor humble boatmen of the Lake of Genesareth, who presumed to preach this new doctrine to the world, with its unintelligible dogmas and its rigid morality. These men, without either talents or influence, undertook to dethrone Jupiter, but whom were they to put in his place? A crucified malefactor, the son of a Judean carpenter! The point then was to induce faith in "one Jesus deceased, whom Paul affirmed to be alive" (Acts xxv. 19). After having devised so startling a paradox, they do not insinuate it secretly, nor endeavour to spread it by the aid of infatuated persons and weak intellects, ever yearning after some new article of faith; but they proclaim it from the house-tops to all who pass by. At Jerusalem, and in the synagogues of Asia, of Greece, of Egypt, everywhere they preached this new doctrine. If it be an enterprise destined to end in miserable failure, it is, nevertheless, one in which stupendous weakness hurls itself against the combined might of the world. The Roman Empire, a colossal power

[1] "The Cæsars."

[2] *Et dixit ei Nathanaël: A Nazareth potest aliquid boni esse?*—"And Nathaniel said to him: Can any thing of good come from Nazareth?" (John i. 46).

if ever there was one, could easily have crushed the first preachers of the Gospel. Material force was wholly against this handful of rebels, nevertheless these men succeeded in establishing the Divinity of Jesus Christ; and Christianity finally brought under its control the civilisation of the ancient world.

V. Our assertion is confirmed by the fact that persecutions attended the steps of the Apostles: they came at once, they were severe, and of long duration.

The new doctrine had scarcely spread abroad, when it was persecuted by every official authority, and Christians were as much hunted and proscribed as the greatest criminals. The disciples of Christ, those mission preachers who went from town to town to proclaim the Saviour, were spared neither insults, mockery, threats, slander, hatred, nor cruel outrage. They were imprisoned, condemned to death, and cast out everywhere as the scum of the earth.

At Rome, John was thrown into a cask of boiling oil; Paul was beheaded; Peter was crucified; Andrew, Peter's brother, met the same fate in Achaia; Bartholomew was burnt alive by the Armenians; at Jerusalem James was thrown from the pinnacle of the Temple, and, as he still breathed, they beat him to death with clubs. The successors of these heroes, continuing to discourse on the folly of the pagan theogonies, and to affirm that their Master Jesus Christ was God, and had risen from the dead, received the same treatment. Others took their places, who preached the same truths, and in their turn sealed their testimony with their blood.

There are whole chapters in the New Testament which prove with what fury the Apostles were persecuted—"We commanded you that you should not teach in this name, and behold, you have filled Jerusalem with this doctrine!" When they scourged them, they replied by the mouth of St. Peter—"We ought to obey God rather than men!" And the narrator adds—"And they indeed went from the presence of the council rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus" (Acts v. 28-41). We read also in the Acts, "as concerning this sect,

we know that it is gainsayed everywhere" (xxviii. 22). The same narrative records the death of Stephen, of James, the brother of John, of the imprisonment of Peter and of the other Apostles, and of the dispersion of the disciples. At first the Jewish High Priests acted with some moderation, but, as the number of believers increased, the persecution assumed a more violent form. The orders received by Saul denoted their resolve to resort to extremities, the imprisonment of the believers and confiscation of their goods being the measures generally employed. The touching exhortation contained in the Epistle to the Hebrews leaves us in no doubt on this point—"But call to mind the former days, wherein, being illuminated, you endured a great fight of afflictions. And on the one hand indeed, by reproaches and tribulations were made a gazing-stock; and on the other became companions of them that were used in such sort. For you both had compassion of them that were in bonds, and took with joy the being stripped of your own goods, knowing that you have a better and a lasting substance" (Heb. x. 32-34). The "former days" were those of the first persecutions, but these persecutions were incessantly renewed, which is the reason that St. Paul adds—"Do not, therefore, lose your confidence, which hath a great reward! For patience is necessary for you, that, doing the will of God, you may receive the promise" (v. 35, 36). We perceive, also, that the Epistle of James is addressed to the persecuted Churches. It begins by the inculcation of patience in tribulation, and ends in the same manner.

If we look beyond Palestine we shall see that the Church was persecuted throughout the whole Roman world. The Jews at Rome knew nothing of the Church, except that it was "gainsayed everywhere." St. Paul, speaking of his trials, says that they were shared by his converts, and he writes to the Galatians—"Have ye suffered so great things in vain?" (Gal. iii. 4). And to the Corinthians—"In all things we suffer tribulation, but are not distressed; we are straitened, but are not destitute; we suffer persecution, but are not forsaken; we are cast down, but we perish not . . . for we who live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of

Jesus may be made manifest in our mortal flesh" (2 Cor. iv. 8-11). And, on the eve of his death, he wrote to his disciple Timothy—"But thou hast fully known my doctrine . . . and what persecution I endured, and out of them all the Lord delivered me" (2 Tim. iii. 10, 11). If we read the Epistles of St. Peter, we see that he constantly recalls the example of the Passion of Christ, putting before us the reward of those who suffer for righteousness sake (1 Peter ii. 21, 22; iii. 14; iv. 1-19). Speaking of the persecution under Nero, Tacitus bears witness to the great number of martyrs, and the frightful torments to which they were subjected.[1] The persecution under Domitian was not less severe, and Pliny's letters[2] and the narrative of the martyr Ignatius give us trustworthy information of Trajan's policy towards the Christians. Under Hadrian also no peace was granted to the Church, and the vindications which appeared in the first half of the second century were partly written to justify the Christian Church from the accusations which were brought against her, and to prove that the persecutions to which she was continually exposed were undeserved.

Celsus, who wrote his "True Discourses" about A.D. 178, triumphantly describes the Christians as "hunted everywhere, overpowered, driven to and fro, ferreted out, that they might be exterminated." He had some cause to speak thus, for he wrote the very day after the atrocious yet sublime tragedy of the martyrs of Lyons, and on the eve of the martyrdom of St. Cecilia.[3] The first twenty-two Popes each suffered martyrdom, and we reckon at least three million of the faithful who were also put to death.[4] Martyrdom was the invariable consequence of the avowal of the faith during the first three centuries.

[1] "Tacitus nobly praises the heroism of the Stoics, and recalls their deaths as worthy to be compared only to those of the ancients—*Laudatis antiquorum mortibus pares exitus.* But so much does prejudice and party spirit obscure the judgment, that he cannot perceive the same sublimity in death, the same extraordinary constancy, as that which animated philosophers and eminent persons, in people from the most humble ranks, men of all sorts and conditions, and weak women who boldly confessed the faith for which they suffered and died. For them he expresses only contempt and hatred."—E. Littré, "Études sur les Barbares et le moyen âge," pp. 21, 22.

[2] "Annales," X., 97, 98.

[3] "Origen contra Celsum," VIII., 69.

[4] We say "at least" in order to avoid dispute. M. Rénan and M. Aubé would both admit this minimum.

Until the time of Charlemagne the Church was incessantly compelled to defend herself against imprisonment, exile, tortures, death, and heresy. St. Augustine tells of the atrocities committed by the Donatists. "The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel," Scripture rightly says—*Viscera impiorum crudelia* (Prov. xii. 10). The Coliseum, that immense chalice, overflowed a hundred times in the three centuries with Christian blood. The first Christians were, said St. Paul, "as it were men appointed to death," but they found in death the secret of life. "In truth," writes St. Augustine, "by prayer, by patience, by the calmness with which they met death, they made princes ashamed of the laws which condemned Christianity, and compelled their repeal." The folly of rationalism was thus counterbalanced by the "folly of the Cross." "To conquer by suffering"—*patiendo superare*—such was, according to St. Augustine, the motto of the early Christians, and the Church could sum up the history of her youth, as St. Paul did his own life, in the two words—"Combats without, fears within." Christianity was then violently opposed everywhere, and would undoubtedly have been suppressed but for miraculous and Divine intervention. The wonder is that the Church, on the contrary, derived through persecution and martyrdom, reinforcements more numerous than her losses. Nothing was more convincing than this testimony borne to Christ by pure and heroic souls, unyielding as refined gold.

Of all the manifestations of Christian courage, indeed, martyrdom was the one which the pagans understood least and admired most. They understood their gladiators shouting at the foot of the Imperial balcony—"Hail, Cæsar! We, on our way to death, salute thee!" But these hymns to Christ, this supreme reverence to a supreme and invisible Head, this calmness face to face with death, this faith already changed to sight, this fearlessness on the confines of the world beyond the grave, these condemned criminals in whom their executioners recognised the sacred character of victims prepared for the altar—all this amazed and perplexed ancient paganism, and the songs of the martyrs proved often to be like their blood, "the seed of

the Church." When they appeared before the public gaze, facing threats, submitting joyfully to torture, braving death, their contemporaries said to each other—"These men are sincere: they have seen what they narrate!" The shrewd and refined Greek, the sober and sedate Roman, accepted a religion which demanded a complete reform of their morals, and then even preferred torture to a life of pleasure. They died exclaiming—"We believe in Jesus Christ; we, the descendants of Themistocles and Alcibiades, of the Fabii and the Scipios, we believe—we do indeed believe."

To the scornful unbeliever, who is not impressed by the transformation that Christianity has effected in the world, Christian verity is only, as it was to the Roman pro-consul, a question of "one Jesus deceased, whom Paul affirmed to be alive"—*De quodam Jesu defuncto, quem Paulus affirmabat vivere.* But to the Christian, to the intelligent and unprejudiced observer, it is quite otherwise. According to the Gospel parable, the fermentation of the new wine has burst the old bottles; on the exhausted furrows of the Roman world the new doctrine has deposited the germs of resurrection. Jesus said, when pointing to His Cross—that Cross which Nietzsche calls "the most poisonous of trees," but which in reality is the most fruitful and long lived—"I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself." Jesus has indeed thus drawn the world to Himself; He has held it in His bleeding arms, and it has been thereby transformed.

It has been transformed in its laws. Compare ancient with modern legislation; the old contempt for human life, with the respect now shown for it; the pagan neglect of the poor and the helpless, with the careful protection accorded by Christianity to the weak and the needy; the legal complicity with power and wealth, and the obstacles everywhere now opposed to their unbridled ascendancy, and the gradual emancipation of the slave.

It has been transformed in its morals. Humanity, it is true, is not completely sheltered by the Cross from all defilement, and thorns by the wayside sometimes rend the white robe in which Christ has clothed her. But there were public scandals and infamies, revealed to us by ancient

authors, from which the blood of Christ flowing from the Cross has for ever cleansed our modern world; the reign of the senses has disappeared. We remember the pride that Rome took in her Vestal Virgins; yet, ever since the Cross was set up on Calvary, let us ask ourselves how many monasteries have been founded, how many virgins have lived retired from the world, how many contemplative, preaching, and hospitaller orders have sprung up among every race and in every clime? M. Thiers has said—"Christianity has given a meaning to sorrow!" He might have added—"And to virginity!"

> The nectar cup becomes a chalice dread,
> The couch voluptuous turns to funeral pyre;
> For festal robe the haircloth rough is spread,
> Suffers the flesh, the soul yearns to aspire."[1]

It has been transformed in its civilisation, and in the expression of this civilisation by literature and art. Chateaubriand wrote on this subject in his "Genius of Christianity." From the time of Christ the human intellect has produced fruits of which it might not have been thought capable, and has inspired many immortal works. Christianity has been, in truth, the all-enveloping "pair of wings" spoken of by M. Taine, which has raised from the dust the ancient world: from it the modern world dates. It has risen from the grave of Him who willingly submitted to death, and from the Tree of Shame it was conceived beneath the blood-stained arms of the Cross. Thus, when by the aid of ancient history we consider this marvellous transformation of the world, we are compelled to exclaim, with Chateaubriand—"Truly we confess that He who could induce such devotion to a Cross could not have been a mere man!"

VI. The evidence of the establishment of Christianity becomes still more striking when we consider that, notwithstanding the difficulties which we have pointed out, the doctrine of Christ spread itself all over the world after His death with incredible rapidity. Christ compared His operations to "the lightning that cometh out of the east, and appeareth even unto the west." Pagan customs presented

[1] Sully-Prudhomme, "Le bonheur," ii.

an insurmountable barrier to Christianity—a barrier difficult to break through—but when the iron heart of paganism was once riven, it very soon conquered the known world, and evidence followed facts as thunder follows lightning. This unheard-of result cannot be explained by any known laws of society or of history. The preaching of the Gospel commenced about A.D. 33. The Apostles, with Peter at their head, inaugurated their apostleship by the conversion of three thousand men, amongst whom were Parthians, Medes, Elamites, dwellers in Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, and Asia. Some days afterwards they made a new conquest of five thousand souls. In compliance with the command of their Master, "Go ye into the whole world, and preach the Gospel to every creature" (Mark xvi. 15), the Apostles immediately went abroad, beyond Judea, into the neighbouring provinces, and to the most remote tribes, preaching the Gospel everywhere (Mark xvi. 20). In less than thirty years they had proclaimed it to twenty different peoples; what a prompt and daring capture both of the Roman and barbarian worlds! Peter went to Antioch, which boasted of its Cicero; Paul preached at Athens, "the home of orators and the mother of philosophers"; at Tarsus, the centre of education for the Roman youth; at Alexandria, celebrated for its schools; and at Corinth," "the city of the two seas"—"bismare," as Horace calls it—and thus Christianity became connected with the most distant countries. Andrew went to Scythia; Thomas, according to Eusebius, to India and Parthia; Bartholomew, to another part of India; Matthew, to Persia and Ethiopia; Jude, to Arabia; Simon, to Persia; Matthias, to Egypt and Abyssinia; John, first to Asia, then to Ephesus, where he died; Philip, to Samaria; and James, called the Just, to Jerusalem. The Apostles thus took possession of the known world from the Atlantic to China.

In his Epistle to the Romans (Rom. i. 8) St. Paul congratulates the Roman believers that "their faith is spoken of in the whole world." The same Apostle writes to the Colossians—"The Gospel which is come unto you, as also it is in the whole world, and bringeth forth fruit and groweth, even as it doth in you" (Col. i. 5, 6). Pope St. Clement, who was the immediate disciple of the Apostles, certifies in his

authentic Epistles to the Corinthians, that Peter and Paul had won over multitudes of souls, and that Paul had preached in the extreme West. St. Justin, writing a century after the resurrection, verifies the accomplishment of the prophecy of Malachi. He says that "throughout the human race, amongst the wandering tribes of the desert and the uncivilised barbarians living in the open air, prayers are offered to the Creator of all things in the name of Jesus Christ." [1] Tertullian thus addresses the Roman magistrates—"We are but of yesterday, and you behold us everywhere! We fill your islands, your towns, your castles, your villages, your councils, your camps, your tribes, your palaces, the Senate and the Forum; we leave you only your temples.[2] Pliny the Younger wrote to Trajan, A.D. 160—"Not only our towns, but our suburbs and villages are overrun by this pestilential superstition!" He depicts "a large number of persons of every age, sex, and condition" professing Christianity, and exhibits the "pagan temples deserted, the sacrifices intermitted, and the victims without purchasers." [3] And this only seventy years after the death of Jesus Christ! Tacitus speaks of the large number of Christians who were at Rome in the time of Nero, and of the progress of this *exitialis superstitio* —"pernicious superstition." [4] About the same time Hermas, in his "Shepherd," wrote that the Son of God had been announced to the nations by those whom He had Himself sent. And this capture of souls was not only rapid but complete and conclusive. The vast dimensions of the Catacombs—that subterraneous abode of the Christians—with its tombs concealed in innumerable underground passages, prove to what an extent Christianity had spread in Rome. We can also recall how the soul of ancient France was conquered by those new teachers who one day disembarked on her shores. And everywhere else it was the same. Twenty years after our Lord's Ascension St. Paul could apply to the spread of the Gospel by the preaching of the Apostles those words of the Psalmist—"Their sound hath gone forth into all the earth, and their words unto

[1] "Dial. Tryph.," No. 119.
[2] "Apol.," Chap. xxxvii.
[3] Book X., Ep. 97.
[4] "Annales," Book XV., Chap. xliv.

the ends of the world" (Ps. xviii. 5). M. Rénan, in his "Marcus Aurelius and the End of the Ancient World," has drawn a map of the then known world, showing the geographical extension of Christianity up to the end of the second century. He says at the commencement of the chapter entitled "Statistics and Geographical Extension of Christianity," that "before A.D. 150 the prophecy of Jesus was fulfilled; the grain of mustard seed had become a tree, which was already overshadowing the world." The grain of mustard seed is a very expressive picture of Christianity —an incipient force, boundless, though imperceptible—a powerful organism contained in a small seed. And thus the miracle which M. Rénan refuses to perceive in the origin of Christianity reappears as a still greater wonder in the progress of this religion that he represents to us, as baffled at the outset by a multitude of harassing influences and by internal dissensions, as hardly to be distinguished from Judaism, as exhibiting in St. Peter and St. Paul antipathies of race, doctrine, and character, as propagated by a few poor and ignorant enthusiasts incapable of acting in concert, compelled to conceal themselves, and preaching the sacrifice of all the joys and blessings of life. Duke Albert de Broglie, in his work on "The Roman Church and Roman Empire of the Fourth Century," when discussing the attempt to revive paganism which marked the accession of Julian, points out, in turn, how this official reaction strove in vain to achieve the ridiculous and the impossible. "The effort to bring these gods to life again sufficed to prove to the whole world that they were utterly defunct. Julian sacrificed time and trouble in attempting to resuscitate these corpses. He succeeded only in proving that, though the truths of Christianity may sometimes be impaired through the various infirmities of human nature, the falsehoods of paganism can no longer find any refuge save in the antiquated imagery of poets and rhetoricians. Julian did more to establish what he wished to destroy than did Constantine to compromise that which he honoured." "It is an undeniable fact," says M. de Champagny, "that the doctrine to which no one gave any heed in the time of Augustus, reckoned under Nero, only forty years later, thousands of adherents, and after the lapse of four centuries

had conquered the world. I venture to ask how it was that, in the short space of forty years, this doctrine, which originated in an obscure country, among ignorant and unlearned men, had from the first a practical, definite, and universal character, more philosophical than any philosophy; how it was that this doctrine, so little favoured by the tendencies of preceding eras, gained notwithstanding access to all the chief towns; and though a religion so contrary to the ideas, interests, and passions of the age, attracted in so short a time so many disciples? And in what consisted the power, the hope, the aim of these men, who were eccentric enough to believe, bold enough to preach, and strangely fortunate enough to succeed in disseminating this doctrine? A natural explanation of this fact has never been given. As easily might we explain the mystery of the birth, as that of the spread of Christianity. The conversion of mankind, initiated by twelve men from among the common people, and accomplished by the sole power of preaching, which appealed neither to the imagination nor to the interest nor to reason, remains one of the most unaccountable marvels to which history bears witness."[1] "The spread of the Christian faith throughout the Greco-Roman world," writes M. Barthélemy St. Hilaire, "appears in the annals of the human race as an event of matchless and truly miraculous magnitude."[2]

We speak of the development of Mahommedanism; it has been in every respect the reverse of the development of Christianity. Mahomet procured the triumph of his opinions only by means of his wealth and by a fratricidal contest. The military conquests of his successors have always been mistaken for spiritual victories. It is the sword alone that has everywhere cleared the way for Islam. Mahomet founded his religion only by trampling on the nations; wherever he was defeated he was never able to make a single convert. As Pascal very appositely remarks—"The ways and means pursued by Jesus Christ and those pursued by Mahomet were so entirely opposed to each other that, since Mahomet succeeded, Jesus Christ must necessarily have failed, and Christianity would have perished had

[1] "The Cæsars."
[2] *Journal des savants*, March, 1864, p. 185.

it not been sustained by Divine power." We speak in the same way of Buddhism, which, in the words of M. Rénan, "has subjugated half Asia, through the influence of motives entirely political and moral."[1] The Hindoos forced it upon the barbarous Chinese, these again upon the people of Annam and Japan, as well as upon neighbouring nations. Nowhere could this lax religion resist the breath of persecution. Moreover, Buddhism and Mahommedanism taught no mystery, maintained superstition, permitted polygamy and divorce, and in no way obstructed the civil power. Besides, it cannot be proved that Buddhism ever spread rapidly; Buddha, Confucius, Laotsu, are merely legendary personages. But Christianity, on the contrary, derives its unique character from the fact that it is less a doctrine than the proclamation of a Man, or rather of a God, by the very witnesses who had seen and followed Him for several years. Jesus is emphatically an historical personage; this cannot be said of Buddha.

As to Protestantism, numerous natural causes amply suffice to explain its rapid propagation. Bossuet admits that the notorious licentiousness of the clergy, especially in Germany, added to the support of princes, who were allured by the bait of a share in ecclesiastical property, greatly contributed to it. To these reasons we may add the decline of faith in the authority of the Papacy after the Great Schism. The principle of private judgment, which permits every man to form his own creed, was not likely to injure the spread of the Reformation. It is easy to say to men—"Good works are useless in order to obtain salvation"; it costs little to exempt them from all rule and from all restraint. To induce belief in this doctrine it is only necessary to leave things alone. But what does this prove? Protestantism is founded on no miraculous or supernatural fact; it is only a secession from Catholicism. The abuses of the Papal Court sufficiently explain the fanaticism of those who denounced Rome, and the partisans that they made among the faithful. This was not a Catholic thesis. Even infidels thus explain the dissemination of Protestantism.

[1] "Vie de Jésus," p. 45.

VII. The conversion of the pagan world to Christianity is a fact which infidelity finds it a hopeless task to explain. Facts are a necessity in our practical age; this one is of no small importance. It does not require that one should be especially intellectual to understand it. A fairly sensible child could account for it. Napoleon used to say, "Nothing is so stubborn as fact." Christianity is the greatest intellectual and social event of history, for it has changed the course of the world, and rules it still. Such is the opinion of the best-informed men, even of those who are not themselves Christians. After having asserted that for nineteen hundred years Christianity has been the most prominent fact in history, M. Brunetière, an authoritative critic, declares that "all past events point to Christianity as the termination of Judaism, and the *raison d'être* of all sacred history." Such was also the opinion of M. Rénan, a fact that M. Brunetière has no inclination to forget.[1] I venture to call the attention of the unbeliever to this fact. Can he explain it? If Jesus was only a man, how can we account for His permeating influence? By what means has this amazing revolution been effected? How has Christ succeeded in freeing the world from heathen spells? How has a despised man swept away those revered divinities to whom the whole universe bent the knee? Can any one supply a natural explanation of the wonderful appearance in a corner of the Roman Empire of an unforeseen and unprecedented doctrine, which suddenly renewed the face of the earth, and changed the very foundations of family and social life?

An obscure Galilean, unknown to the Jewish doctors, without any learning or attainments, designs the plan of bringing man back to God, whom He declares to be His Father. Not only does He devise this scheme, but He achieves it: He attracts followers, whom He captivates by His gentleness; He fills both His disciples and the multitude with enthusiasm by His miracles. This revolution, inaugurated by an unknown peasant, and by successors of the same stamp, increases rapidly. The doctrine that they preach is inexplicable to reason, and clashes with ancient creeds. On the one side impotence,

[1] "Études critiques de littérature," 5e série, p. 86.

on the other desperate opposition. The first disciples lay down their lives; others replace them, equally meek and patient as they, and finally, after repeated efforts to exterminate Christianity, it is discovered that the whole world is Christian. Thus from the decay of a single grain of wheat a golden harvest appears. There is nothing satisfactory to urge against this simple evidence.

Since the doctrine of Christ has been proclaimed it has withstood alike persecution, worldly power, and learning, and even the cruelties and crimes of its children. The feudal system, the monarchial constitution, every civilised form of government, have in their turn passed away and been succeeded by others; the doctrine of Christ has survived unchanged! The living and universal community founded by Jesus Christ belongs to all ages, races, tongues, and continents; to Him we owe the highest perception of God, the purest moral law, the most perfect domestic model, the most prolonged and exalted period of civilisation. All this is the work of this unique Man. On the anniversaries of the chief events in His life everything pauses, as it were. Christmas and Easter remain for ever, and in all climes, the solemn festivals of the year. We might erase the name of Jesus Christ from our laws, obliterate it from all books, scrape it off the face of every monument. It would be in vain. On mountain slopes, in peaceful valleys, in the depths of poor garrets, on silent tombs, two small pieces of wood in the form of a cross would speak ever of Him. In the momentous hours of our lives we sign His name on our foreheads and on our breasts. We venerate the names received in baptism of those martyrs and virgins who gave their lives and shed their blood in His service. And to-day, still owning fellow-citizens in every nation, Christianity is even more active than ever; her battles are so many victories; the Cross has become the badge of honour, and, as Bossuet says, we ever behold the "Divine Malefactor" bearing sway over the world.

Christianity has taken possession of society, but its grandest triumph is that by the mystery of the Cross alone it has regenerated souls. And this evidence cannot fail to be appreciated by well-informed and honest people who know what life is. Christ said to the rich, "Be charit-

able"; to the poor, "Be content"; to the master, "Rule with fairness and gentleness"; to the servant, "Obey with deference and affection"; to the learned, "Be humble"; to the ignorant. "Be teachable and diligent"; to us all, "Love one another"! With these simple maxims He has brought the whole world under the sway of liberty and peace.

Search antiquity for such a soul as that of a St. Louis, a St. Vincent de Paul, a St. Francis de Sales; or amongst women for a St. Teresa or a St. Chantal! They cannot be found, for the noblest souls among the ancients were deficient in that ideal which beams forth from Christianity; that superior conception of both Divinity and humanity, which the Gospel has given to the world. An impression which could effect such a revolution must necessarily have been very strong, and much more than human; the divine character of the Christian religion shines forth in this result. "All this causes one to reflect with a vengeance!" exclaimed an illustrious infidel,[1] a sentiment that has been repeated by many others, even by those who are not of our faith. M. Bersot, director of the Higher Normal School, said one day to a friend of M. Charles Perraud—"The establishment of Christianity will ever be to me an unaccountable and unexplained fact."

Another eminent rationalist, Cousin, said to the same person—"I would mount the scaffold rather than deny the Divinity of Jesus Christ!"[2] "Be well assured," wrote M. Martin de Noirlieu to an old pupil of the Polytechnic, "that the Son of Mary will be the perpetual torment to the reason and conscience alike of all those who, on reflection, refuse to worship Him as the eternal Son of God!"[3]

In short, then, to refuse credence to facts which have completely changed the whole social and individual life of the civilised world, and for two thousand years have won the respect of the choicest minds, is not an intellectual attitude possible to any earnest man. After having meditated on the life of Jesus Christ; after having considered His matchless character and superhuman doctrine;

[1] Rousseau.
[2] Narrative by Ch. Perraud, "Libre pensée et catholicisme," p. 64.
[3] "Études philosophiques sur le christianisme," par M. l'abbé de Noirlieu.

after having surveyed the footprints and reminiscences that He has impressed upon history, every one who is logical and sincere must freely admit that Jesus is His own best evidence. "I desire," said Augustine Thierry to Charles Perraud, "a simple faith. I am no philosopher, but an historian. I do not attempt to sound the depths of metaphysics in Christianity; that is beyond me. I take the Church as a fact which forces itself upon my consideration, and which I can neither eliminate nor evade. On the other hand, if I try to explain, on natural grounds, the existence of this fact, and the effects it has produced on the progress of history, I fail completely. Human reasons are out of the question when we consider the establishment of the Christian religion in the world, and its propagation by the Church!"[1] Such, then, are the substantial, decisive, and truly scientific grounds on which the illustrious historian justifies alike to himself and to others his humble and sincere conversion to the faith.

On historical testimony, as on all other, we repeat with Tertullian—"The Christian cause dreads nothing except condemnation without investigation. Truth does not plead for mercy; she demands only the judgment of the Great Day!" And again he says—"Who, then, in contemplating Christianity, would not be tempted to search whether its basis was not divine?"[2]

No. Jesus was only Man by virtue of a perfect human nature, by the beauty of His soul, and by the tenderness of His heart. "I am well acquainted with men," said a conqueror who had known how to rouse every passion in human nature, "and I declare that Jesus was no mere man." "The greatest of heroes stands alone," says Carlyle in his book entitled "Heroes." "One whom we will not name. Let a sacred silence surround this sacred subject." In the dazzling Presence of this unrivalled Personage our souls instinctively recognise the Divine.

"Of whatever faith criticism deprives us," says Stuart Mill in his "Memoirs" of his father, "the Christ remains to us an unique Form, which rises above His predecessors

[1] Mgr. Perraud, "A propos de la mort et des funérailles de Rénan," p. 24.

[2] *Quis non contemplatione ejus concitetur ad requirendum quid intus in re sit?*—Tertullian, "Apol."

as much as above His successors." Thus does one of the most eminent representatives of the empirical school speak of Jesus Christ. Let us now hear the avowal of one of the most implacable of His opponents. "The Christ," says Strauss, "could not be succeeded by any one who surpassed Him, nor even by any who could attain after Him, and by Him, to the same absolute height of spiritual life. Never in any age would it be possible to rise above Him, nor to imagine any one who could be His equal."[1] "Jesus," says M. Rénan, "is the Man of colossal proportions to whom the Universe has unanimously accorded the title of the Son of God, and justly so, since He alone has carried religion to a height in which no other could ever compare with Him. We must place Him on the pinnacle of human greatness, because in Him is comprised all that is purest and most exalted in our nature, and His sublime personality controls for ever the destinies of the world."[2] And again—"Christianity has become almost synonymous with religion. All one's convictions apart from this good and great Christian tradition would be unfruitful. Jesus founded the religion of humanity, as Socrates founded philosophy and Aristotle science. His doctrine is not circumscribed the religion that He has established is unlimited."[3] And finally—"On the summit of the hill of Nazareth where Jesus stood, no modern man could stand without trembling for his fate! And at this moment Rationalism dares to regard Him with steadfast gaze only on its knees before Him!"[4]

[1] "On the Transitory and the Permanent in Christianity," p. 127.
[2] Rénan, "Vie de Jésus," 1re édit., pp. 448, 449.
[3] Conclusion.
[4] Page 15.

CHAPTER II.

HISTORICAL VALUE OF THE BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

"Moreover, the Scriptures which the Apostles have bequeathed to us support one another with a force which is invincible."—BOSSUET, "Discours sur l'histoire universelle," Part II., Chap. xxviii.

"Can any one say that it is not evident that in every version and text to which reference can be made, the same laws, miracles, prophecies, history, doctrine, and substance are found?"—*Ibid.*, Chap. xxvii.

IMPARTIAL minds will not fail to acknowledge that the facts which we have arrayed before them are of the first significance and importance, and such as cannot be explained in any mere natural way. But we must expect to encounter other minds of a more exacting disposition who will press the question whether the history of the Founder and of the first Apostles of Christianity is authentic and genuine, and whether the Gospel narratives are true in all their details. These form a numerous class amongst students, to whom indeed this work is especially addressed, who, taking up the tone of the age, are imbued with the spirit of criticism, are full of curiosity on all scientific points, and desire to be perfectly honest with themselves. Besides these we find many firm believers who wish to give an account of their faith, and who repudiate the notion of a mere blind belief.

After M. Rénan had so suddenly and sadly severed his connection with the Church, he spent the rest of his life in attempting to prove that the foundations of the Christian faith are rotten, and that the Bible, the Church's Sacred Book, is nothing but a human compilation.

Now, if we can prove decisively that the New Testament is absolutely authentic, we shall succeed in convincing those who are tempted to doubt, and in winning over to the truth those who have no faith. Instead of wasting time in

discussing the inutility of Revelation, the possibility or the impossibility of miracles, and the incomprehensibility of mysteries, the unbeliever should first examine the Gospel facts, and prove either their falsity, or, at all events, their uncertainty.

If the miracles of Jesus Christ are true, it follows that His doctrine must be accepted, in which case natural religion becomes insufficient. It has been proved that miracles are not impossible. The difficulties urged by human reason count for nothing at all. Not every point can be explained, it is true; but then God knows all things. And this is the most solid proof of Christianity, the best proof for an exacting mind. "If it were proved," said Strauss, "that the biblical history was written by eye-witnesses, or at least by men who were contemporaries of the events narrated, the orthodox" (by which term he means the Catholics) "would have a stronger position."[1] "If," says Rénan, "there is any truth in miracles, my book is nothing but a tissue of errors; if miracles, and the inspiration of certain books, are real events and not mere fictions, our methods are detestable."[2] We can clear up the question and convince many minds, by demonstrating the conversion of the world, the rapid spread of the Gospel, and the triumphs of the Church after nineteen centuries of warfare. Such proofs as these are very convincing. But if we can show that he who wrote the Acts was a companion of St. Paul, that St. Peter wrote his Epistles, and that St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. John wrote their Gospels, this will be a decisive proof. We feel as much as Pascal does the need of attaching ourselves with the greatest ardour to the personality of Christ, convinced that apart from Him there is nothing but irremediable and uncompromising scepticism. And this we can prove in a manner which cannot be contradicted. In order to demonstrate the authenticity of the books of the New Testament we shall resort to three kinds of proof.

We shall first draw out the positive evidence, which has been transmitted to us by antiquity, on the composition of these sacred Scriptures, and especially with reference to their authors. We shall also produce quotations, or

[1] "Leben Jesu," vol. i., p. 69.
[2] "Vie de Jésus," preface, p. 5.

references to passages in the Scriptures, which are met with in the authors who were contemporary with them or lived immediately after them, including more particularly the writings of early heretics and misbelievers, which will prove the existence and the influence of the Gospels at certain definite periods. All this is external evidence.

In the second place, we shall repeat the proof offered by Bossuet, which is also presented by M. Wallon. This is, for ourselves, the sovereign proof of the authenticity of the Gospels. It consists in demonstrating that the books of the New Testament support one another, and are united by a common bond, so that if any one of them is wanting in internal evidence of its genuineness and authenticity, sufficient evidence of both will be found for it in the others.

In the third place, we shall examine the information which the books themselves provide as to the personality of their authors, the circumstances in which they wrote, and the motives which impelled them to compose their respective productions. These constitute the internal evidence.

By combining these three classes of proof we shall be able to draw a definite conclusion, which is the end we have in view in the present chapter.

I.

The authenticity of the books of the New Testament, limiting the field of our inquiries as far as possible to the four Gospels, is proved by an unbroken chain of evidence traced back to the very days of the Apostles.

That St. Matthew composed the first evangelical narrative is attested by an unanimous tradition, dating from apostolic times. Papias, one of St. John's hearers, died about A.D. 130. In a work written by him, of which Eusebius has preserved certain portions, he affirms that Matthew wrote the history of Jesus in Hebrew.[1] The same witness is borne by St. Irenæus, first a priest, and afterwards Bishop of Lyons. He says—"Matthew also published, in writing,

[1] "Ecclesiastical History," III., 39.

the Gospel among the Jews, composed in their own tongue, at the time that Peter and Paul were preaching and founding the Church at Rome."[1] According to this the Apostle must have written in Palestine about the year 63 or 64, for it was only at that period that Peter and Paul could have met in the capital of the world.[2] We may add the evidence of Clement of Alexandria ("Strom.," i. 11); Origen (Ap. Euseb., "Hist. Eccles.," vi. 25); Tertullian ("De Carne Christi," 22, "Adv. Marc.," 4; 2, 5). The Apostolical Fathers, St. Polycarp ("Ad Philipp," c. ii.); St. Ignatius ("Ad Rom.," c. vi.); and St. Clement of Rome, who died A.D. 101 (1 Ep. cxlvi.), all give us free renderings of St. Matthew's Gospel, which must, therefore, have been well known to them. The same is true of the author of the letter attributed to St. Barnabas (4 St. Matt. xx. 16). St. Justin Martyr, towards the middle of the second century, quotes numerous passages as memoirs of the Apostles and their fellow-labourers. These quotations bear a closer resemblance to the first Gospel than to any of the others.[3] To these ancient witnesses we may add a more recent one, who is important because he recapitulates all the declarations of the Fathers, namely, Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, at the close of the third and the beginning of the fourth centuries. In his "Ecclesiastical History," III. 24, he writes—"Matthew, after commencing to preach to the Jews, wishing to go to preach to other nations, also wrote his Gospel in Hebrew, in order to make up for the void created by his absence."

About the year 60 the Apostles seem to have quitted Jerusalem. The date indicated by Eusebius, therefore, coincides almost exactly with that given by Irenæus. Finally, by way of collective testimony of the highest importance, we may point to the title by which the first Gospel has been designated at least since the second

[1] "Adv. Haeres.," iii. 1.

[2] (1) The discourse in St. Matthew xxiv. would have been differently given had Jerusalem already been destroyed. The writer must certainly have indicated that this part of the prophecy had been fulfilled, had such been the case. (2) Barnabas, whose Epistle dates from 70-79, quotes St. Matt. ix. 13 and xxii. 14, and quotes the latter passage as "Scripture." If this Gospel was recognised as Scripture before 80, it cannot have been composed much later than 65. (3) Undoubtedly this Gospel is identical with the one known to the writer of the Epistle of Barnabas, Justin Martyr, and to his disciple Tatian.

[3] See Sernisch, and also Hilgenfeld on St. Justin.

century, "The Gospel according to St. Matthew"—that is to say, according to the edition compiled by Matthew. This title manifests the feeling of the Church at that early date. The first Gospel was, in the second century, employed and regarded as a Greek version of a composition in Hebrew (or Aramaic, the language spoken by our Lord) about the year 60 or 61.

Papias is the first to give us information on St. Mark's Gospel—"According to the priest John of Ephesus, Mark, as the interpreter of Peter, wrote out with exactitude everything of which he had preserved the remembrance concerning both the acts and the words of Jesus, though not in the precise order of events, for he had neither heard nor followed the Saviour. He only followed Peter, who expounded the doctrines of Christ according to their circumstances.[1] The essential fact attested by this account is that St. Mark's Gospel is nothing more than an edition of the narrative recited by Peter in the Churches through which he passed when preaching the Gospel. Clement of Alexandria, and Origen,[2] who both belonged to the Patriarchate of Alexandria which St. Mark founded, confirm these statements. In fact, the account given by Clement in particular may well serve to complete that of Papias. He says—"When Peter publicly preached in Rome, and in the power of the Spirit proclaimed the Gospel there, his numerous hearers entreated Mark (who had for long accompanied him, and well remembered everything which Peter had related) to write down these things, and then to send his Gospel to those who had asked it of him. Peter having been made aware of this did not oppose the request, nor forbid that Mark should accede to it."[3]

Tertullian in Africa, and St. Irenæus in France, also furnish us with two strong proofs.[4] St. Jerome thus recapitulates the tradition of the first centuries—"As the disciple and interpreter of Peter, Mark made his Gospel a concise summary of what he had received from Peter. That Apostle having read it, approved of and published it that

[1] Euseb., "Eccles. Hist.," III. 39.
[2] *Ibid.*, vi. 25.
[3] Eusebius, "Eccles. Hist.," VI. 14.
[4] See "Contra Marc.," iv. 5; "Adv. Haer.," iii. i. ix. 6.

it might be read by the Church, in virtue of his authority."[1] Clement also relates the same thing in Book VI. of his "Hypotyposes." Hence we are able to conclude that it was during the latter part of St. Peter's life, about the year 64, that Mark wrote his Gospel.

St. Luke's narrative possesses an equally unanimous and ancient sanction. "Before Strauss," says Tholuck, "only two dreamers (both English) had arisen to question the authenticity of St. Luke." Irenæus wrote—"Luke, the companion of Paul, committed to writing the Gospel preached by the latter."[2] In the Muratorian fragment, which was written about the year 170, we find the following passage relative to St. Luke:—"In the third place, the Book of the Gospel of St. Luke, the physician, who, united with St. Paul as his companion, wrote in his own name, according to what he considered was good. He never saw the Saviour in the flesh himself, but having gathered correct information from the best sources, he commenced his account from the birth of John."[3] In his "Stromata," Clement of Alexandria relates that, according to the ancient writings, "the two Gospels containing the genealogies were written first." Tertullian is no less explicit.[4] Eusebius does not hesitate to admit this Gospel among the ὁμολογούμενα, that is, among the books universally admitted as authentic in the primitive Church.[5] It would be difficult to explain this evidence otherwise than by a positive tradition. Lastly, we find in St. Jerome (and it is needless to quote later evidence) the following passage:—"Luke, the Syrian physician, formerly of Antioch, the disciple of the Apostle St. Paul, composed his book in the countries of Achaia and Bœotia."[6] From these testimonies we conclude that the work of Luke was composed in Greece, before that of Mark, and consequently between 60 and 64, at the same period as the Gospel of St. Matthew.

Tradition is equally unanimous in attributing the fourth

[1] "De viris illustribus," c. viii.; "Epist.," cxx. 16, "Ad Hedib."
[2] "Haer," iii. 1; comp. xiv. 1.
[3] See, with reference to this fragment, Père Valroger's "Introduction historique et critique aux livres du Nouveau Testament," vol. i., p. 76, translated by Reithmayer into French.
[4] "Adv. Marc.," iv. 5.
[5] "Hist. Eccles.," III. 4.
[6] Prologue.

Gospel to John. From the beginning of the second century, shortly after its publication, the Gospel of St. John was known, cited, and commented upon by the most ancient of the Fathers, such as St. Ignatius, St. Justin, Athenagoras, the author of the Clementines, Theophilus of Antioch, Tertullian, and St. Irenæus. It will suffice here to quote the authority of the Muratorian fragment.[1] "The fourth Gospel is by the disciple John. His colleagues and the bishops pressed him to compile it, and he said to them—'Fast along with me for three days, and we will then communicate to each other what has been revealed to us.' During the night it was revealed to Andrew, the Apostle, that John should write all in his own name with the approval of the others." Irenæus, in his youth, lived at Smyrna, near St. Polycarp, who was the friend of St. John. He writes as follows:—"After that, John, the disciple who leant upon the breast of the Saviour, published the Gospel while he dwelt at Ephesus in Asia." In several other places Irenæus refers to this sojourn of John in Asia, which certain persons have of late endeavoured to prove to be doubtful. All the priests who met together with John, the Apostle, in Asia declared that it was he who left this testimony, for he resided among them until the time of Trajan.[2] We know certainly that the Emperor Trajan ascended the throne in the year 98; Irenæus states that John's chief end in the composition of his Gospel was to combat the false doctrines which had begun to spread among the Christians and the dioceses in Asia. Clement of Alexandria states in the following passage, which accords with the tradition handed down by the priesthood until his day—"John, the last, having observed that the exterior facts of the life of the Saviour had been treated of in the three Gospels, composed a spiritual Gospel at the instigation of eminent persons and under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost." By the three Gospels he evidently means the three synoptics, of the origin of which he had already treated; and by the term "spiritual Gospel" he signifies a document

[1] The Muratorian Canon, which dates from A.D. 180 or thereabouts, offers the first formal list of New Testament books. It omits, however, Hebrews, James, and Second Peter, but notices the partial acceptance of the spurious "Apocalypse of Peter."

[2] "De viris illustribus," Chap. vii.

intended to admit the Church into a knowledge of the interior spirit of the facts recorded rather than of the facts themselves. To these detailed accounts must be added the series of facts belonging to the ecclesiastical history of the second century, which all go to confirm the evidence of the wide diffusion and truly apostolic authority of the fourth Gospel at this epoch. We are thus enabled to note the traces, more or less distinct, and the influence of St. John's Gospel in the most certainly authentic letters of Ignatius, in the Shepherd of Hermas, and, above all, in the writings of St. Justin Martyr.

But it is not the Church alone which bears witness to the authenticity of the Gospels; writers outside the fold of the Church have done the same.

Pagans have testified to the authenticity of our Sacred Books. St. Jerome, whose example we may well imitate, remarks—"I desire no further proof of the authenticity of our Gospels than the admissions of Celsus and Porphyry." This proof should bear equal weight at the present day. Celsus, about the middle of the second century, draws his objections to Christianity from what he terms "the true discourse," which he gives in the very words of the Gospel. Before Celsus could speak with such assurance, and attack the Christians by quotations from the books attributed to the disciples of Christ or their companions, he must have himself believed in their authenticity, and must have felt persuaded that their authenticity was so indisputable as to prevent his objections from being set aside.[1]

Porphyry, writing after the "Recensions" of Origen, who attacked the authenticity of the Book of Daniel, did not himself contest that of the Gospels, evidently because he was unable to do so. He drew the greater part of his objections from the New Testament, as also did Julian. As he lived in the middle of the fourth century he must have been well aware of all the assaults which Christianity had

[1] The earlier heretics, Ebionites, Encratites, Valentinians, and others, all admitted the authenticity of the Gospels. Had they been fraudulently composed, some suggestion of the fact would have appeared as soon as the Gospels were made known. Neither the Gnostics nor any of the earliest assailants of Christianity questioned the authenticity of the evangelical records. Even the Jews have never disputed their genuineness. Celsus, Porphyry, Hierocles, and Julian, the Apostate, did not impeach their authorship. According to St. Justin Martyr, the Gospels were read publicly in the churches as early as A.D. 150, and probably much earlier. No substantial changes could, therefore, have passed unremarked.

sustained during the preceding centuries, yet he never once quoted from any book of the New Testament without attributing it to the author whose name it bears. The student is referred for a fuller account of pagan testimony to Lardner.[1]

The influence of the Gospels is still more apparent among the early heretics, who were most opposed to one another in their respective tenets. We mention among the chief of these, Cerinthus, who, about the end of the first century, denied the inspiration of St. Paul, but approved of at least a portion of St. Matthew's Gospel; the Nazarenes and the Ebionites used the "Gospel according to the Hebrews," which was derived from St. Matthew; Marcion mutilated St. Luke's Gospel to make it conformable to his own theories; but Tertullian showed the followers of the heresiarch that the Gospel of Marcion was fundamentally that of St. Luke. One of the most decisive proofs of the authenticity of this Gospel is its acceptance by the Marcionites, and it was the only Gospel they would admit. They first mutilated and then appropriated it, terming it "the true Gospel of Christ." Nothing exceeds in value the testimony of Marcion, the bitter enemy of the Mosaic economy, when he acknowledges the Gospel of St. Luke, which implies the authority of that economy. The evidence in favour of each Gospel which can be collected from the several sects respectively is found summed up and confirmed by Tatian, the unfaithful disciple of St. Justin, who united the whole of the Gospels into one.[2] The works

[1] "Witness of the Ancient Pagans," t. VIII., Chap. 37-46. See also Mgr. Meignan's "Les Évangiles et la critique au dix-neuvième siècle," p. 290, etc. Tertullian and Eusebius both relate that the Emperor Tiberius was so impressed by the report sent in by Pontius Pilate that he proposed to the Senate to include Christ among the national gods. Lampridius in his "Life of Alexander Severus," states that the Emperor Hadrian also desired to rank Christ among the gods, but his intention was frustrated by the pagan priests. The Jews do not deny the Gospel miracles, but state that Christ worked all His wonders by means of a stone on which the name of Jehovah was engraved.

[2] "The Diatessaron." In 1881 Fr. Ciasca of the Hermits of St. Augustine found in the Vatican Library an Arabic MS. containing the "Diatessaron" of Tatian. He also discovered another copy of the same work bearing the inscription—"This Gospel was composed out of the four Gospels by Tatian, in what is called the 'Diatessaron.'" Competent critics state that this Arabic version was translated from the Syriac in the ninth century. It agrees with a Latin version made by Victor, Bishop of Capua, in 545. The agreement which exists between all these documents, the products of such different nationalities, proves that they are correct reproductions of Tatian's work, and this is an important item of evidence in favour of the Gospels.

of the Gnostic Basilides contain many direct quotations from St. John. The influence of that Evangelist is evident in the writings of Valentinian, whose entire system, as Bunsen remarks, was "constructed out of materials borrowed from the prologue to St. John's Gospel." His principal disciple, Heraclitus, wrote a complete commentary on that Gospel. Among the Judæo-Christian Essenes, from whom arose the whole of the pseudo-Clementine literature, the fourth Gospel is several times cited in their works. This party formed the antipodes of the Marcionites and Gnostics, and yet they agreed with those heretics in their recognition of the Gospel of St. John. One small sect alone seems to have questioned the authenticity of this fourth Gospel. It was named by Epiphanius the sect of the Alogi. But even this rejection contains an indirect confirmation of the authenticity of the Gospel, for the Alogi attributed it to Cerinthus, the well-known adversary of St. John at Ephesus, which proves that the Alogi believed the Gospel to have been composed at Ephesus, and also in the lifetime of St. John. It would be difficult indeed to understand how all these detailed accounts could have been fabricated, and adopted, without controversy, by the whole Church; and how so many writers, both orthodox and heretical, maintaining often the most contradictory theories, could have borne such unanimous testimony to this Gospel, had not a very solid and unassailable tradition been the foundation of the general conviction as to its apostolic origin. The heresiarchs, then, of the second century, all bear witness to the authenticity of our Gospels.

We would refer the reader for further information on this point to the learned argument of Mgr. Ginoulhiac. After showing that all the separated sects of the first and second centuries concur in proving the authenticity of the New Testament, he continues—"But the Jews and the heathen, who are the natural enemies of Christianity, also come to our aid. It is certain that many of them were acquainted with at least some of the sacred writings, and hence it is evident that those writings existed, and were publicly accepted by the Church, as early as the beginning of the second century. Celsus, profiting by the

example of the Marcionites, recommended the Christians to correct their Sacred Books. He nowhere ventures to accuse them of having forged those precious documents, but he uniformly, and without drawing any distinctions, attributes them to the disciples of Jesus. He does not suggest that the authors were not contemporary with the facts they record, nor does he impute ignorance or fraud to their narrations. He certainly does charge them with exaggeration in some places, play of the imagination in others, and of self-deception through their blind and fanatical love of their Master. These tactics, as we have already shown, were adopted by the Jews in every age; and we may add that all the pagan adversaries of Christianity since Celsus have followed their example. They have agreed with him in not attempting to deny the authenticity of our Sacred Books; like him they have never contested the Gospel facts, nor sought to set the Apostles in opposition to one another. They accused them of misrepresenting the doctrine of their Master; of exaggerating His miracles; and of having imagined, either through credulity or through some interested motive, that they saw Him risen from the dead. They regarded the Apostles as fanatics and impostors, but did not deny that the books attributed to them were their own work.

"By what right can any one at the present day maintain a contrary opinion? Even if the tradition of the Church were uncertain, what reasonable objection could be urged against the unanimous testimony of all the separated sects, whose admissions are so numerous and so striking? And what is to be said of the tradition of the great adversaries of Christianity, which descends to us from the earliest times? It is idle to talk of the progress of criticism. Was there no such thing as intelligent criticism at that distant epoch? Should we say that the problems were too difficult for solution? This was certainly not the case for the Church in apostolic times. At that period it could not have been a matter of uncertainty whether, for instance, Matthew wrote a Gospel addressed to the Hebrew Christians in their own language, which was afterwards translated in the Church; nor whether this book was publicly read and received in the assemblies of Christians; nor whether

Mark, the disciple of St. Peter, or Luke, the disciple of St. Paul, each wrote a Gospel equally received and venerated everywhere; nor whether St. John, who had only been dead a few years, also wrote a Gospel and three Epistles; nor whether the Bishops of Asia, of whom several still lived, had received them from his hands: nor whether Paul wrote, or did not write, letters to different particular portions of the Church, and whether these churches preserved and communicated his letters to others: nor whether Luke, the disciple of Paul, completed his Gospel by the history of the first days of the Church in Jerusalem, and of the early labours of St. Paul. Everything that can be said is reduced to these questions. But they are simple public facts on which it was impossible for priests, doctors, and bishops to be deceived, since the respective portions of the Church were in constant communication with each other.

"It was absolutely impossible that doctors, like St. Justin, coming from Palestine, or bishops, like St. Polycarp, coming from Asia to Rome, or that historians, like Hegesippus, who inquired with the greatest care as to what went on in every Church, should not have known which books were read and publicly expounded therein. It was equally impossible that they could have been deceived on such a matter: or that from all the parts of the vast Roman Empire in which they taught, wrote, governed the Church, and sealed the faith with their blood, they could have conspired together to spread abroad and establish everywhere, both at home and abroad, in the teeth of their vigilant and bitter enemies, inventions of so complex a character, or falsehoods so easy to refute, as these would have been. What benefit, too, could such conduct have conferred on the sects separated from the Apostolic Church? For the Judæo-Christian sects, the question whether the Gospel which their communities in Palestine possessed in their own language could be traced to the time before their expulsion from Jerusalem—that is to say, about from twenty to sixty years—and whether that Gospel had been constantly venerated by their ancestors, was not capable of receiving an uncertain answer. For the Greek Judæo-Christians, of whom many resided in Egypt

and in Rome, it was easy to know whether St. Mark's Gospel was really the work of the disciple of Peter and Bishop of Alexandria, or whether it was invented after Mark's death by the Church from which they were separated. For the Gnostics, it could readily be known whether the books on which they commented so laboriously, and considered themselves obliged to mutilate, existed from the beginning, and were publicly admitted by the Church, from the midst of which those heretics sprang in all parts of the Roman Empire. None of these respective witnesses were of a low standard of intelligence. Some of them were men of genius and exceptional talent and learning, who pushed their investigations to extremes, and argued and controverted without restraint. Instead of counting the Gospels as of small import, they made prodigious efforts to accommodate them to their respective systems by the most daring interpretations and the most audacious suppressions. They were, moreover, embarrassed rather than supported by the Sacred Books, so that had they not known the Church to have possessed them from the beginning, or could they have reproached her for dishonesty regarding them with any chance of success, they would certainly not have omitted to do so. They would then have been much more free to establish their traditions, and gain converts to their secret doctrines. Finally, in respect of the Jews and the pagans, would not they have known whether the Church which they so cruelly persecuted from its origin, and whose progress was so great a source of anxiety to them, had always possessed its Sacred Books? Did they not hotly pursue the Church with bitterest hate from the very first? Did they not seek, by every means in their power, to bring it into disrepute? Were there not also among their ranks traitors who had abandoned Christianity, as there were apostates, later on, in the Roman Empire? They certainly, then, possessed every possible opportunity for assuring themselves of the origin and date of the Christian books. They possessed, discussed, and criticised the alterations made by certain sects in their writings. Would they not have discovered their spuriousness had they been recently tampered with? And would not such a possibility have constituted an effectual weapon

against the Christians? Did the Sacred Books not contain within themselves irrefragable evidence of the date of their composition, of their originality, and of the sincerity and sound sense of their authors, their historical character would still be unassailable. In any case, no scholar can deny that these documents descend to us from the earliest days of the Christian Church, and that they are the work of some among those who were the principal founders of it."[1]

II.

Our second proof is as follows. The sacred authors combine to form of themselves so solid and impregnable a defence against all the assailants of Christianity, that criticism cannot overthrow it. The ties which unite the various books of the New Testament are so close, that when once the authority of one of them is admitted, it becomes difficult to reject that of the remainder. The four Epistles of St. Paul, of which even M. Havet is obliged to recognise the authenticity (viz., those to the Romans, Galatians, and First and Second Corinthians), might very well suffice to replace the whole of the Gospels had they disappeared, for they contain, at least substantially, both the facts and the doctrines of the Gospels. This proof is given by Bossuet. He says—"As for the New Testament, the Epistles of St. Paul, taken by themselves, are so original, so full of life and power, contain such vivid descriptions of events occurring in the times to which they belong, are of so marked a character, were so invariably recognised by the Churches to which they were addressed, and communicated by them to other Churches, that they were calculated in every respect to convince a well-ordered mind that everything is unchanged and original in the Scriptures which the Apostles have left to us. Moreover, they support one another with a force that is irresistible. The Acts simply continue the Gospel narrative, and the Epistles necessarily suppose the existence of the Gospels."[2] M. Wallon, in his

[1] See "Origines du christianisme," by Mgr. Ginoulhiac, vol. i., p. 276. Also "La foi et la science," p. 164, by the Abbé Moigno.
[2] "Discours sur l'histoire universelle," Part II., Chap. xxviii.

work "Croyance due à l'Évangile," has worked out this proof exceedingly well.[1] In order that the connection between the New Testament writings may be made plain to all, it suffices to join issue with the adversaries of Revelation upon one solid point of discussion. The author has wisely selected for this purpose the Epistles of St. Paul, which even the Tübingen school of critics—called by Ewald the "school of the blind"—does not contest. Those Epistles possess the interior marks of their own authenticity, they confirm the authenticity of the Acts, the Acts that of St. Luke, and St. Luke that of the first two Gospels. The fourth Gospel amply speaks for itself, but receives abundant additional proof from comparison with the others. Lastly, the learned author, by a final effort, shows that these proofs apply to the Gospels as we have them, and that the texts are integrally the same now as they were at the date of their origin. The Epistles of St. Paul, at least those to the Romans, Galatians, Corinthians, and to the Thessalonians, are admitted to be authentic, even by those who place no reliance on the history told in them. Ampère, in his "Correspondance," says—"If anything could convince me, I declare it would be that, against the causes for the existence of a difficulty so deep, so obstinate, and so undaunted, such a strong array of arguments for the foundation of Christianity has, notwithstanding, been set up." The proof is easy enough, but it is necessary all the same to produce it, for, as M. Wallon says, "that which people deny to-day they may not deny to-morrow." There is not a student in all Germany who does not admit the authenticity of those Epistles of St. Paul which we have named. Paul, in fact, was the most important personage in nascent Christianity. He was, so to speak, the organiser of the primitive Church. He contributed more than any other to sever it from Jewish customs. His ardour in the cause of Christ acknowledged neither limit nor obstacle; it carried him from one end to the other of the Roman Empire in order to found new Churches. He held his faith from a direct and immediate special Revelation from Jesus Risen

[1] His book is filled with learned and delicately reasoned inductions, the majority of the chapters in it are models of argument, and their conclusions are indisputable.

(1 Cor. xv. 3-8). He states that he compared his Gospel with that of the Apostles who offered him the right hand of fellowship. St. Paul fills the whole history of the first century, and his Epistles are so closely allied to his life and work, they bear so faithfully and indelibly the impress of his character and of his genius, his personality shines forth through them in so many unforeseen and picturesque details, that they could neither have been invented nor falsified. It will be sufficient to name the Epistles to the Corinthians, in which the Apostle traces anything but a flattering likeness of the primitive Church of Corinth, and of the disorders and laxity which prevailed within it. Assuredly, as M. Wallon remarks, the Corinthians would never have recognised these letters had they not been received by them during the lifetime and from the hands of the Apostle. Not only did they acknowledge having received them, but they also preserved them with the greatest care, as St. Clement of Rome mentions in his celebrated Epistle to the Corinthians. Every one admits that his letter is genuine, and that it was certainly composed towards the close of the first century. Again, M. Wallon writes—"There is not a single Epistle that does not reveal the personality of its author, either by certain traits in his character, which in their sudden contrasts seem to baffle all calculation, or by a thousand little incidents of daily life such as a forger could never have thought of nor have been able to palm off upon the faithful. Among these are St. Paul's advice to Timothy for husbanding his strength, 'Drink not only water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities' (1 Tim. v. 23). Again, his quotations from profane authors; for instance, a verse from Epimenides against the Cretans in his Epistle to Titus, and one from Menander in his Epistle to the Corinthians, as well as various allusions to Timothy's youth in his letters to him (1 Tim. iv. 12; 2 Tim. ii. 22). In some places there are obscure passages such as might be expected in letters addressed to persons who were acquainted with facts to which the slightest allusion would suffice. Then there are methods of argument and of style such as were not generally used in the art of writing. Syrian and Cilician idioms are found appearing in the Greek after a

fashion which would be inexplicable in any non-original work."

Moreover, the teachings contained in the Epistles show almost everywhere that they were delivered *apropos* of certain particular events or facts, and these facts are often of such a kind as to exclude all idea or suspicion of fraud. Who, for instance, could have invented or forged such an Epistle as that to Philemon, a person unknown save by this one letter? And yet in no other Epistle does its author, St. Paul, so truthfully reveal himself; we read therein his spirit and his heart. In fine, on some purely secondary points there are certain narrations so exact, and yet of so unforeseen a character, that no one could attribute them either to chance or to artifice. An English Protestant, Dr. Paley, composed a volume filled with arguments of this kind.[1] They are to be met with independently of any search for them; they occur in the midst of the narrative of facts, but would have been anachronistic had they been introduced into narratives of a later date, where, indeed, it would have been impossible to find them. The date of the various writings of St. Paul is perfectly clear. They carry us back to the epoch anterior to his captivity, which took place about the year 62. He mentions nothing in his Epistles which does not point to a period preceding the destruction of Jerusalem and the persecution instituted by Nero. One fact alone, the last in the order of time, bears witness to a later epoch. But that was the time during which St. Paul was still alive and in which he died, and thus the Epistles successively refer to different periods in his career. It suffices, in order to learn the principal facts of the life of Jesus, to read through St. Paul's Epistles, on every page of which they are recorded. For instance, we find His origin from David, His humiliations, miracles, death on the cross, and resurrection forming the themes of the Apostle's exhortations, reproofs, and burning appeals. Not one of St. Paul's Epistles could be attributed, with a shadow of justice, to a forger. Tradition and common sense alike forbid any such supposition. We take our stand upon these writings, which no one has ever contested. Using them as our assured starting point, we may boldly

[1] "Evidences of Christianity" and "Horæ Paulinæ."

defy the critical efforts of rationalism. In fact St. Paul's Epistles prove for us the authenticity of all the other books of the New Testament.

Let us first of all collate them with the book of the Acts of the Apostles, and we shall find a mass of coincidences, distinctly defined, common to the Acts and these Epistles, which prove that the author of the former could not have compiled his book without knowledge of the Epistles of St. Paul. Hence it is clear that it must have been a companion, disciple, and intimate friend of St. Paul who wrote the Acts. Indeed, in recording the mission of the great Apostle in Macedonia (Acts xvi. 10), the author, in several passages, uses the pronoun "we," evidently recording events in which he himself took part, as one of the band who accompanied Paul. From a close and attentive study of the Acts, and a careful comparison of the narratives in the first person with the Epistles of St. Paul written at a corresponding date, no other conclusion can be arrived at than that the author of the Acts was St. Luke. He alone appears by the side of St. Paul under all the circumstances, according to traditional belief, in which the use of the plural pronoun "we" suggests that he and St. Paul were the persons signified. The remarkable analogy between the account of the institution of the Holy Eucharist in St. Luke and that given by St. Paul in 1 Cor. xi. is a significant illustration of what we mean. Moreover, the agreement between the post-resurrection apparitions of Jesus related in St. Luke xxiv., and those enumerated by St. Paul in 1 Cor. xv., particularly the apparition to Peter, which is nowhere else mentioned, is an evidence of the relations existing between St. Luke and the Apostle. Indeed the entire third Gospel is only a solid historical foundation destined to support the edifice reared upon it by St. Paul. It treats of the right of the Gentiles to participate in the salvation gained for man by the Christ. Two great principles formed the groundwork of the preaching of St. Paul, namely, the free and the universal salvation offered to all men. Rénan says—"The Gospel of Luke is an orderly composition founded upon older documents. It is the work of a man who chooses, elaborates, and combines. The author of this Gospel is certainly the same person as he who wrote

the book of Acts. But the author of the Acts is a companion of St. Paul, and this title suits Luke perfectly.[1] In another place he says—"The author of the Acts is certainly Luke, the disciple of Paul."[2] We have, therefore, the witness of a contemporary on the origins of the Church, a man of education, associated with both the facts and the persons of his narrative. We could not desire a more solid foundation for our faith.

Rationalism vainly endeavours to assign a later date than the traditional one to the Acts. But the book shows its own date with sufficient clearness. After leaving St. Paul captive in Rome, it concludes with these words—"And he remained two whole years in his own hired lodging: and he received all that came in to him, preaching the Kingdom of God, and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, without prohibition" (Acts xxviii. 30, 31). The two years thus passed by St. Paul, almost free, but under the surveillance of a Roman soldier, were from A.D. 62 to 64. For the rest Paul was careful to authorise the work of his Evangelist. In his letter to Philemon he mentions Luke as working near him under his supervision (Phil. 24). "What Paul makes known to us regarding the twelve," says Irenæus, "and what Luke attests, agree in every particular; and form, so to speak, but one and the same testimony."[3] It cannot help our adversaries to divide the Acts into two, and to state that the last chapter contains "the only really historical pages which exist on the origins of Christianity."[4] The reason for this unjustifiable distinction is that in the earlier portions of the book miracles are abundantly recorded, and miracles do not commend themselves to the rationalistic mind; but what becomes of the Epistles of St. Paul which are held up in opposition to St. Luke's narrative as being documents of a superior character whose genuineness is incontestable—what of these, if the same rule of criticism is to be applied to them? Does not St. Paul tell the Galatians of his revelations (i. 12; ii. 2); while to the Romans he writes

[1] "Vie de Jésus," p. xvii.
[2] "Les Apôtres," introduction, p. xviii.
[3] "Adv. Haer.," iii. 133.
[4] "Les Apôtres," introduction, p. xxvii.

of the miracles wrought by him from Jerusalem until he reached Illyricum (xv. 19); and to the Corinthians of the divine signs which appeared daily among the faithful (1 Cor. xii. 9, 10, 28, 30). Like St. Luke, Paul witnessed marvels in the early Church: then why should we refuse to the disciple the title of historian which is readily given to his master?

The authenticity of the Epistles of St. Paul involves that of the Acts. Having arrived at this conviction and proved its correctness, we may proceed to collate the Acts with St. Luke's Gospel—one of those whereof the authenticity is well shown by internal evidence. We shall find between these two books such close resemblances and similarities of style as will prove conclusively that the authenticity of the Acts involves the admission of the authenticity of Luke, for the same reasons that the authenticity of the Epistles of St. Paul proves that of the Acts. The author of the Acts offers this book as the continuation of another history, that of Jesus Christ, as truly composed by him, dedicated to the same Theophilus, and brought down to the Ascension of the Saviour. We have only to compare the prologue, and the last two verses of the third Gospel, with the prologue to the Acts, when the whole story will be found to hang together, and instead of regarding them as two distinct works, we shall rather consider them to be two portions of one and the same historical work by one and the same author. From Nazareth to Capharnaum, and from Capharnaum to Jerusalem, is comprised in the Gospel narrative; while from Jerusalem to Antioch and from Antioch to Rome, is the story detailed in the Acts. This continuity forms the unity existing between the two parts of Luke's work. The third Gospel belongs, therefore, to the period during which the author lived to whom it is attributed, and there are no solid reasons for judging otherwise. Moreover, between this Evangelist and the author of the Acts there is identity in both language and style. The same vocabulary, terms, and construction are found in both. To a Greek scholar who thoroughly understands the subject, no doubt on these points is possible.[1]

[1] See P. Mertian's "Études religieuses des Pères Jésuites," for July and August, 1863, pp. 774-782.

The comparison of this Gospel with the first two synoptics proves that it was posterior to them, and, up to a certain point, according to them. There are, in fact, between St. Luke and the first two Evangelists verbal similarities which show that St. Luke knew either these two Gospels, or some earlier history from which they were derived. Consequently, we are justified in concluding that they existed before he wrote his Gospel. The quotations from them, and the first phrases which form the exordium to his narrative, prove this. These are his words—"Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a narration of the things that have been accomplished among us, according as they have delivered them unto us, who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word, it seemed good to me also, having diligently attained to all things from the beginning, to write to thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mayest know the verity of those words in which thou hast been instructed" (St. Luke i. 1-4). Thus Luke knew the writings of those who were either witnesses themselves or who wrote on the word of witnesses. Hugh, a German critic, endeavoured to place St. Luke before St. Matthew, by pretending that Luke would not have dared to write his Gospel had Matthew been before him in the field. But this argument is valueless from a Christian point of view, and is refuted by the prologue to St. Luke. He adds that had Luke been subsequent to Matthew he would have omitted nothing contained in the latter. We see no reason for this assumption. It would be much more difficult to account for St. Matthew's omission of many details given by St. Luke, since, from the identity of expression in several of their recitals, it is certain that one must have been acquainted with the other. The reasons for placing St. Matthew before St. Mark hold good for placing him before St. Luke. But was Mark anterior to Luke? Hugh has rightly shown that if St. Mark had been posterior to St. Luke there would have been no reason for his Gospel. If the historical order had been established, and the particulars given with greater exactitude, as we find them in St. Luke, why should Mark have written, with less regard to both, after Luke? Not only would his book in

such a case have been useless, but it would also have been inexplicable, for with St. Luke before him he would not have been likely to omit systematically what Luke had not taken from St. Matthew. It may be that Mark reproduced the primitive *cathechesis*, and that Matthew and Luke added to it facts drawn from other sources. We cannot logically first acknowledge Luke's authority where he modifies St. Matthew's narration, and then despise it where he completes or amplifies the first Gospel.

All critics now agree that the fourth Gospel everywhere supposes the knowledge of the three synoptics. There is not a mutual adaptation more exact between the spokes of a wheel than that which we observe between the narrations of St. John and of the three preceding Gospels. The parts omitted by the one are supplied by the other, as do the more prominent features in this last correspond to the omitted passages in the former. John begins his story with the latter part of the ministry of the Baptist, without giving any account of the first portion, and without alluding to the Baptism of our Lord. This is the reverse of what we find in the synoptics. He recounts the call of the first believers on the banks of the Jordan, but does not mention their ultimate elevation to the rank of permanent disciples on the shores of the lake; which, again, is the reverse of the synoptical narrative. John gives details of a long period of public ministry in Judea, before the Galilean ministry, which the synoptics omit; and, when he reaches the epoch of the Galilean ministry, so fully described by his predecessors, he merely relates one particular event with two brief recitals that appear to be references to other writings which the author was aware were known to his readers. On the other hand, he dwells with evident predilection on the sojourn at Jerusalem, which forms a remarkable omission in all the synoptics. In the last stay at Jerusalem he omits the embarrassing questions addressed to Jesus in the temple, but relates with care the request of certain Greeks omitted by the other Evangelists. In the account of the Last Supper he mentions the washing of the feet, but omits the institution of the Eucharist; and in telling the story of the trial and judgment of Jesus he mentions the "leading away to Annas" omitted by the

others, and then, by way of exchange, passes over in silence the grand session of the Sanhedrim at the house of Caiphas where Jesus was condemned to death. In his description of the Crucifixion he gives three of the last words of Jesus omitted by the synoptics, but leaves out the other four recorded by them. Among the post-Resurrection apparitions those to Mary Magdalen and Thomas, omitted or hardly alluded to in the synoptics, are circumstantially described; only one of the other appearances is mentioned, and that with special details not found in the other Gospels. It would be impossible to desiderate more certain evidence of the relationship existing between the fourth Gospel and the synoptics. Clearly if St. John did not write for the express purpose of completing the latter, we need not hesitate to affirm that he supplied the complement to their narrative by what he wrote.[1]

III.

In genuine criticism the authenticity of the Sacred Books is demonstrated by authority and by testimony. We have found a third proof in the connection existing between these writings; but the internal evidence is equally convincing.

In spite of their divisions, modern rationalists agree on this point, that in the Gospels Jesus announces that His miraculous re-appearance will take place shortly after the destruction of Jerusalem and of the temple. We have here to propose an alternative, which is decisive only on the rationalistic hypothesis, but which is nevertheless of great value in the Christian hypothesis. Either there is no question of an immediate apparition, or else there is question of one.

If, as rationalists state, these books were written subsequently to the destruction of Jerusalem, we cannot understand why, seeing that Jesus had not appeared, the Evangelists should narrate a story which could be used as an argument against our Lord. It cannot, on the other hand, be asserted that they would not have explained their meaning more clearly had the prophecy been realised. Evidently

[1] Godet, "Commentaire sur l'Évangile de saint Jean."

the Evangelists either wrote before the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, or they did not intend the apparition of which they spoke to be understood as of proximate occurrence.

Moreover, all the facts, dates, names of persons and places, and details concerning morals, manners, and customs have passed through the crucible of criticism, and the result has been an almost unanimous recognition, on the part of just and impartial critics, of the striking agreement existing between the sacred writers and the most careful and exact witnesses of the epoch in which they lived: such are medals, inscriptions, and monuments, together with the Jewish, Greek, and Roman historians themselves.

Pliny and Strabo have left details of the geography and condition of Palestine in apostolic times. Tacitus and Titus Livius wrote their "Annales" a little later. The Jewish historian Josephus especially furnishes much important information as to the events occurring in Judea during the first century under his own eyes. All the attempts of the critics to discover defects in our Gospels have been without result. It has been shown that the Apostles possessed so profound a knowledge of the period in question that they were assuredly its contemporaries.[1] In the year 70 Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed, the Jews were dispersed, family genealogies were confused and lost, the Mosaic worship ceased, and most of the towns and villages in Palestine became a heap of ruins. In a word, the political, civil, religious, and topographical conditions of Judea all underwent numberless changes and modifications. If the Gospels had not been composed before the second century, they would have contained mistakes and false statements, since their compilers were but simple and unsophisticated men. "Such general accuracy and agreement," says M. Wallon, "are the more remarkable considering the facility with which the names of rulers and the political conditions might have been mis-stated in a country disturbed like that of Judea, by so many rapid changes in the history both of men and events."[2] We have only to compare the canonical Gospels with the

[1] See "Introduction au Nouveau Testament," P. Valroger, p. 234.
[2] "Vie de Jésus Christ," introduction.

apocryphal writings to see how complete is the difference between what is genuine and what is spurious; the latter not merely bristling with errors but even contradicting themselves almost within the same page. To explain the harmony of the Evangelists with each other, sound logic forces us to admit that they must have been intimately associated with the events they record, and that they belonged both to the age and to the country which their writings describe. More than this we do not ask. For this reason the enemies of Christianity have found it impossible to deprive the Gospels of their chief characteristic, which has been proved to demonstration by the learned Anglican apologists Lardner and Paley—that is to say, their perfect conformity, even in the smallest details, with the state of Roman society such as we know it to have been in the time of Augustus.

We shall now apply this proof to each of the books of the New Testament individually. As has been already shown, the author of the Acts of the Apostles was contemporary with the facts which he relates. This consideration points indirectly to Luke as the author. When a writer places before us an exact picture of the times, the country, manners, political and religious institutions, and the circumstances in which the persons lived who are described by him, we can only conclude that he lived at the period of which he treats, and not at a date posterior to it. The former presumption becomes absolute certainty if the events occurred during a period of transition, preceded and followed by numerous changes in the various institutions treated of, if the theatre of their occurrence has become enlarged, if they touch upon various matters, either of a very special or secret nature, if they enter into details, if many proper names of men and places occur in the narrative, if the subject belongs essentially to an epoch when the sources of historical and geographical knowledge were much more limited than in our days. Now, all these things are true of the Acts of the Apostles. The scene of the events there recorded embraced the whole civilised world of that period, the author conducts us from Judea into Asia Minor and thence into Greece and Italy, and we are introduced to Jewish kings, philosophical sects, and judicial

tribunals. The writer contents himself with no vague description, but cites for us names and facts well known: these names and facts have been carefully noted and examined by men of the highest scholarship, who have tested them by a detailed comparison with the statements of profane history, and their conclusion has been that the author describes with reliable precision the political conditions of the countries wherein the facts related by him occurred. He is well acquainted with the names and the correct titles of the rulers and magistrates, not only in Palestine itself, but also in the provinces of the Empire, notwithstanding their transitory state (Acts xiii. 6). He portrays to us the Jewish nation with its rival sects disputing together for pre-eminence in the Sanhedrim, forming communities in the chief towns, and meeting in the synagogues on the Sabbath to read the law and the prophets, besides praying at certain hours of the day (Acts xxiii. 6).[1] He was versed also in the Roman customs, and speaks of the rights of citizenship, whether acquired by birth or by purchase (Acts xxii. 27-28). He describes all the methods of criminal procedure in the case of St. Paul, his provisional imprisonment, the report of the officer to the governor, the process before that magistrate, the appeal to Cæsar, the detention of the prisoner, and the chain by which he was bound to the soldier who guarded him (Acts xxiii. 25; xxviii. 16).[2]

In his picture of Athens everything is life-like—places, persons, ideas, and dispositions (Acts xvii.). The twenty-eighth chapter, which narrates the journey of St. Paul to Rome, is perhaps in this respect one of the most admirable which the book contains. What we there read concerning the usages in navigation and trade, the delays at different ports, the conduct of the vessel, the state of the sea and of the wind—all these point to the narrator as a man who had been there.[3] This precision of detail and vividness of

[1] Josephus, "Antiquities," xvi. 1-4; "Wars of the Jews," II., viii. 14; L., v. 2; "Contr. App.," II. 17, 36.

[2] Suet., "Aug.," 33.

[3] The discoveries made in Cyprus by M. de Cesnola, by M. Heuzey and the Abbé Duchesne in Macedonia, by Mr. Wood at Ephesus, and by M. Clermont-Ganneau at Jerusalem, prove the correctness of St. Luke, even in the smallest details.

description in the Acts are easily accounted for. With regard to the greater part of the book (Acts ix. 28), Luke had more abundant and more favourable opportunities than any one else for hearing from the lips of Paul, whose companion he had been for over ten years (52 to 63), all the facts relative to the Apostle's youth, to his conversion, to the martyrdom of Stephen, to the establishment of Christianity at Antioch, to the Council of Jerusalem, and to the first missions of Paul and Barnabas (Acts ix. 15).

In the course of his travels St. Luke had repeated occasion not only to visit the places wherein the facts he reports were accomplished, but also to communicate with those who, from the beginning, had been eye-witnesses and ministers of the word (St. Luke i. 2). It suffices to name Peter, James (Acts xxi. 17), Philip the Deacon (*Ibid.* 8), John, Mark, Barnabas (Acts xii. 12; Col. iv. 10-14), and others engaged in apostolic work. Besides, we can look upon certain portions of the book as official documents, already committed to writing and faithfully copied by the author—the two letters, for example, in chapter xv. 20-23 and chapter xxiii. 26; also the discourses of St. Stephen and those of St. Peter and St. Paul, wherever these occur.

According to St. Jerome it was during the two years of St. Paul's first imprisonment at Rome that St. Luke wrote the Acts. Luke accompanied him to Rome (Acts xxvii. xxviii.; Col. iv. 14; Phil. 24). The prevalent opinion is that Luke had just finished his Gospel, and wrote the Acts to complete it. Hence perhaps the freshness and vivacity to be noticed in the account of the concluding events: the scene at Caesarea, the sea voyage, the meeting with the Roman faithful on the Appian Way, and the conference between Paul and the Jews after his arrival; hence also the final words referring to Paul's captivity in Rome (Acts xxviii. 30, 31). Is it credible that the author would have concluded so abruptly and so unsympathetically had he known of either the deliverance or the martyrdom of the Apostle?

As to St. Matthew, an inspection of his work furnishes us with valuable evidence respecting its author. Thus, as St. Jerome points out, St. Mark and St. Luke, in speaking

of the "publican," or receiver of custom dues, never speaks of him before his vocation by any other than his less well-known name of Levi, from a feeling of delicacy or respect. Only when speaking of him as an Apostle do they give him the name of Matthew. The author of the first Gospel knows nothing of such sentiments. He always uses the name Matthew, and when he records the list of the Apostles, he appends to his own name the epithet "publican," and describes him as sitting at the custom-house (St. Matt. ix. 9; x. 3). The same spirit of humility reveals itself under other circumstances. In the lists of the twelve Apostles given in the Gospels and Acts, they are generally joined together in pairs, probably as the Saviour had Himself arranged the first time He sent them to preach. Except in the Acts the fourth pair is always formed of Matthew and Thomas, but in the synoptics Matthew's name is placed first, unless it occurs in his own Gospel, when it occupies the second place, his companion being named first. (Compare St. Matt. x. 3; St. Mark iii. 18; and St. Luke vi. 15.) Three of the Evangelists, Matthew among the number, speak of a banquet offered to Jesus by a certain publican. Who was this? Matthew does not inform us, and we should be driven to conjecture if St. Luke and St. Mark had not distinctly indicated him who left his official position to follow Jesus (St. Matt. ix. 10; St. Luke v. 29). This Gospel alone mentions the didrachma (xvii. 23); it is also singular in relating that when the Jews came to ask Jesus whether it was lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar, He used the expression, "Show Me the tribute money" (xxii. 19). This peculiarity of expression confirms the ecclesiastical tradition which wrote the name of Matthew at the head of the first Gospel. We know that St. Matthew, before leaving the Jews in Palestine who had been converted by him, wished to compose a Gospel for their use, to make up for his absence from them as their teacher. This gift to them accounts for and harmonises with the very method and style of the work. It is intended to assert the sovereign rights of Jesus as the Messias of the Israelites and the Saviour of the world. If Israel did not know how to understand and believe in Jesus, it remained for the world to benefit by His redemption, since the King

of the Jews is at the same time the King of all mankind. A convincing proof of the destination of this Gospel is that it contains no explanation of Jewish usages such as is given by St. Mark, nor of Jewish places as given by both St. Luke and St. John. It is a book written in the land of the Hebrews, and for them. Which truth, let us ask, should the author of the first Gospel have striven to make especially prominent? The great truth controverted by the Jews was that Jesus was indeed the Messias promised to their fathers and proclaimed by the prophets. Now, the end which St. Matthew had in view is revealed in the prologue to his Gospel, where we find Jesus proclaimed as the "Son of David, the son of Abraham." This end gives occasion for numerous quotations from the Old Testament, accompanied by the formula, "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet." To obtain the result at which Matthew aimed it was not necessary to follow a rigid chronological order in stating the facts. For this reason his narrative is characterised by freedom and spontaneity. Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount does not confine itself to one solitary discourse; it joins several together, and furnishes us with a general recapitulation of the whole scheme of Christian morality. The succeeding chapters combine the accounts of several different miracles, and show that Jesus possessed the messianic gift of healing.

A close study of St. Matthew's Gospel informs us of the date at which it must have appeared, as well as the personality of its author. It was certainly written before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70, since it contains the prophecy of that event. In the fifteenth verse of chapter xxiv. we find Jesus warning the believing Jews who dwelt in Palestine against participation in the revolt and war which were to end in the ruin of Jerusalem. He urges them to withdraw for a time into the mountainous country on the other side of Jordan, and appoints, as the date of their flight, the moment when the standards of the Gentiles were to be planted on the soil of the Holy Land. Here we find a remarkable and noteworthy circumstance without parallel in the evangelical writings—the author suddenly interrupts the Saviour's discourse by this remark of his

own, "He that readeth, let him understand." This parenthesis shows plainly that the author must have published our Lord's discourse before the accomplishment of the sign to which he drew attention; for of what use would so striking a notice have been after the event had already happened? As the passage occurs in the Greek version of St. Matthew's Gospel, it must have been taken from the original Hebrew. We are forced to conclude, therefore, that the Greek translation appeared at the time when the danger was approaching, that is to say, a little before the year 66, in which the war commenced. Now, as there must have been a certain interval between the publication of the Greek Gospel and that of the original, we may be sure of not straying far from the truth if we assign the composition of the Hebrew or Aramaic version of St. Matthew to a period between the years 60 and 64.

The internal evidence of the Gospel of St. Mark is of equal importance. We know that Mark was a disciple of Peter. In his Epistle Peter describes Mark as his "son." Mark mentions the name of Peter in many passages where Matthew omits it. The details given in his Gospel are sometimes of such a nature that Peter alone could have supplied them, or was, at any rate, more likely to have done so than the other Apostles. The Gospel of St. Mark is only the development of Peter's discourse to Cornelius (Acts x.): and with justice has that famous sermon been termed "the Gospel of Mark in embryo." Klostermann, a German critic, makes a clever analysis of Mark, and he arrives at the interesting conclusion that very often the text can be explained only by admitting that we find in it the words of St. Peter literally preserved, with this modification alone, that the first person plural "we," as used by St. Peter, is altered to the third person, because more appropriate to a written narrative.[1] Whatever tends especially to the praise of Peter, such as the scene in which Christ lays down the foundation of His Church, is omitted; while on the other hand, anything that tells more to his discredit—the triple denial, for instance—is carefully dwelt on. This is the Gospel which recounts that terribly crushing reply of our Lord to Peter—"Get thee behind Me, Satan" (*i.e.*,

[1] "Das Marcus Evangelium," i. 29; iii. 13-19.

"adversary"). It is not without reason that in his account of the tempest Mark omitted the narrative of Peter's walking across the water to Jesus. Nor are we to regard it as merely accidental that Mark should have made distinct mention of the second cock-crowing[1] as containing a double warning to Peter, and rendering his fall all the more inexcusable. In order to account for the differences between the histories of Matthew and Mark, we shall find that Peter passes over in silence all the points which would have exalted his person, and only permits Mark to recite what was a source of humiliation to him. Otherwise we should have to suppose that the second Gospel was the work of a personal enemy of Peter. As this Gospel gives long explanations of Jewish usages, which are altogether absent from the parallel passages of Matthew, we must admit that the author wrote for Christians converted, not from Judaism, but from paganism. St. Mark shows a special predeliction for words of Latin origin, either at times substituting them for the corresponding Greek terms employed by the other sacred writers (for example, σπεκουλάτωρ instead of στρατιώτης, to describe a soldier; κεντυρίων instead of ἑκατόνταρχος, for a captain; ξέστης, as standing for *sextarius*, meaning a vase of six measures). He sometimes adds the Latinised term by way of explanation of the Greek, thus τῆς ἀυλῆς that is to say, πράιτώριον. This fact proves that the author wrote under the influence of Latin surroundings. On one occasion he indicates the value of a piece of Jewish money in Roman coin, the two mites being equivalent to a Roman farthing. He furnishes his readers with numerous other explanations; sometimes of Hebrew or Aramaic words occurring in his discourse, such as Boanerges, talitha cumi, Bartimaeus, corban, and abba; sometimes of Jewish customs which strangers to Judaism might not know; he states, for instance, what is to be understood by "unwashed hands" and by "parasceve." He, furthermore, points out the situation of the Mount of Olives (xiii. 3), and the date of the celebration of the Passover (xiv. 12). Hence it is evident that he is not writing primarily for Jews, to whom such explanations would have been

[1] Cocks usually crow at about midnight, and again at about the hour of 3 a.m., or at dawn.

superfluous. He employs a great many Latin words in Greek form without explaining them. He alone, of all the Evangelists, speaks of the woman's divorcing her husband (x. 12), a thing unheard of among the Jews, but a common usage among the Romans. Simon of Cyrene he designates the father of Alexander and Rufus—useless information except to those who knew the two sons of Simon as persons of consideration in the Church to which Mark addressed himself. Now, if we can ascertain the domicile of these men we shall at once discover where the author wrote. The Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans settles this question. He requests that they will "Salute Rufus, the elect of the Saviour, and his mother, who is also mine" (Rom. xvi. 13). The date of the Gospel is assured to us by the following facts:—The two sons of Simon of Cyrene were still alive, and we have seen that one of them, at all events, occupied a position of influence in the Roman Church. The apostolic age was at that time not far advanced, and, as we find that the warning given to the believers in Palestine not to neglect the indication by which Jesus pointed out the moment for their immediate flight is as distinctly recorded by Mark as it is by St. Matthew, the fatal hour of the ruin of Jerusalem, in the year 70, and even the commencement of the war in 66, had evidently not yet arrived. We must, therefore, place the date of this Gospel between 64 and 65: nor can we imagine any history bearing more clearly upon it the stamp of authenticity, as having been the work of an eye-witness. It possesses all the freshness and candour of a story of personal recollections. Either it is a simple forgery, which the candour and straightforwardness of the narrative makes it impossible for us to believe, or it is the genuine and honest deposition of a witness. It is not without point that we should recall such natural descriptive touches as the following:—"He was in the hinder part of the ship, sleeping upon a pillow" (Mark iv. 38). "Who, casting off his garment, leaped up and came to Him" (x. 50). "There were so many coming and going; and they had not so much as time to eat" (vi. 31). "And looking up to heaven, He groaned" (vii. 34). Nor should we pass by several allusions to moral impressions, for example:—"And looking round about on them with anger" (iii. 5). "And

Jesus looking on him loved him" (x. 21). "And Jesus went before them, and they were astonished, being afraid, and they followed Him" (x. 32).

Similarly the internal characteristics of St. Luke's Gospel accord perfectly with the personal qualities of its author. History informs us that St. Luke was a physician of Antioch. We have a right therefore to expect to find a certain measure of literary culture exhibited in his work; and we are not disappointed. The culture of the author is revealed on every page, whether we take the prologue, written in Hellenistic taste, or his manner of addressing himself to his subject, or the plan and arrangement of his material, or the art with which the various discourses are introduced into the narrative. This book was written in the sight of the whole Greek world, and in the midst of Greek environments, social, political, and religious; as we cannot fail to perceive even in the preamble. It resembles the prologues of the great Greek historians. The man of dignity to whom the work is dedicated is called Theophilus. This name, of Greek origin, justifies the assumption that its possessor was a Hellene. The general character of the narrative reveals the Greek mind of the author. The whole is a well-connected and coherent history clearly and gradually unfolded, a chain of events, of causes and effects, easily apprehended, and calculated to be highly convincing to the Hellenistic intellect. Such was precisely the deliberate intention of the narrator, as his preamble testifies. "It seemed good to me also, having diligently attained to all things from the beginning, to write to thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mayest know the truth of those words in which thou hast been instructed" (i. 3, 4). He writes frequently in a very pure Greek style, though naturally a Hebrew colouring is at times perceptible in it, since the author faithfully follows the oral and written tradition which had come down to his time. He dates his events according to the reigns of Emperors and Kings, and observes historical order in the disposal of his facts. Being himself a Gentile, and writing for Gentiles, his book is Gentile in character.[1] It is in this Gospel that Jesus is set

[1] His style is also Jewish, but it exhibits features which no one but a Greek, Jew or Gentile, could have contributed.

forth most clearly as the Saviour of all mankind, in evidence of which we have only to turn to the preaching of our Lord in the synagogue at Nazareth (iv. 18-27); the anointing of Jesus by the woman who was a sinner (vii. 36-50); the parable of the Pharisee and the publican (xviii. 10-14); the story of Zaccheus (xix. 1-10); and the conversion of the penitent thief (xxiii. 39-43). Every point which might appear to contradict this universality of Christianity for man is excluded with great care. Not to Abraham, father of the Jewish nation, but to Adam, father of the whole human race, does Luke carry back the genealogy of Jesus. Not only does he avoid everything which could appear injurious to the Gentiles, like the story of the Canaanitish woman, but he suppresses even the very use of that word, as if it implied an invidious distinction. Once more, he reports the words of the institution of the Holy Eucharist with minute verbal exactness, differing thus from the first and second Evangelists, but following the account of his master, St. Paul.

As to the date of this Gospel, we know from the Acts that in the year 59, when Paul reached Jerusalem, immediately before his arrest, Luke was with him (xxi. 17). We also know that when, two years later, the Apostle left Caesarea for Rome, Luke was his companion on the journey, and shared with him all the misfortunes and trials of his shipwreck (Acts xxvii. 1). It seems, therefore, certain that Luke was with Paul in Palestine during the two years which elapsed before his removal thence to Rome, and that during those two years the Evangelist collected the information and materials necessary for the writing of his Gospel. He did not complete it till later, perhaps at Antioch, towards the close of the captivity of the Apostle at Rome in 63, and he must have left the Eternal City while Paul was still in confinement. A further and most excellent reason for referring the synoptics to the date generally accepted during the first century, is the very special character of the idiom in which they were written. That they are original compositions is evident, not only in their subject-matter but also in their language, which is full of Hebraisms, and incorrect in style, words being strained and forced into a meaning far from classical. Clearly their

authors were Jews who spoke Greek, whereas in the post-apostolic age there were but few Jews in the Church. All the Jewish writers were Greek. Beyond doubt, the Greek tongue could not have adapted itself to so strange a syntax, nor have been deformed by Hebrew idioms, methods of expression, or construction, at any other period than one in which Christianity was practically enclosed within the boundaries of Palestine. That possibility ceased to exist as early as the beginning of the second century. The Græco-Roman element became very quickly dominant in the Church, and we have only to compare the style of the Epistles of Polycarp and Ignatius with that of our first Gospels to be assured of this. They contain, therefore, within themselves, evidence of the times when they were written. Professor Holtzmann, of Strasburg, a writer who has recently most profoundly treated of the origin of the first three Gospels, and one who is beyond all suspicion of partiality, since he is at the head of the free-thinking party in the Grand Duchy of Baden, concludes his study of them by declaring that the result of all modern research agrees with what the most ancient ecclesiastical writers have transmitted to us, namely, that the writings which formed the groundwork of our first three Gospels, as well as the Gospels themselves, must have been compiled between the years 60 and 80 of our era—that is, from thirty to fifty years after the death of our Saviour.[1]

We come now to the fourth Gospel.

Its author, St. John, is, like St. Paul, one of the most important personages connected with primitive Christianity. He had the advantage of living with Jesus, a privilege not accorded to St. Paul. He was, moreover, the favourite disciple, and the recipient of our Saviour's confidences. As M. Wallon says—"No one was better fitted to write a Gospel than St. John, for he had followed Jesus from the beginning of His ministry to its completion on Calvary, where our Lord entrusted to him the guardianship of His mother, the Blessed Virgin." His evidence is the most important and the least disputed of all. With the exception of the Alogi, who refused to admit the authority of St. John, as they also rejected the doctrine of the Word,

[1] "Die synoptichen Evangelien," pp. 412-414.

Christian antiquity never doubted the true character of this Gospel. In modern times all the Evangelists except John have been assailed. The first attack began with the "Probabilia" of Bretschneider in 1820; but it elicited so many protestations against this author's doubts, that he withdrew them, declaring that he could not have provoked a more complete refutation of them. Strauss later on reproduced the arguments of Bretschneider, but in the preface to his third edition he confesses that he is now not so sure of his facts as at first. After recalling the arguments of Welte and Neander in favour of the first Gospel, he adds—"This study has destroyed in my mind the importance of those doubts which I had conceived against the authenticity of St. John's Gospel and the measure of credence it merits. It is not to be said that I am convinced that the fourth Gospel is authentic, but that I am no longer convinced that it is not so."

The Gospel of St. John is a book completely original in character. No model is extant which John could have imitated; and among his disciples there is not one who approaches him in vigour, or who possesses such a distinct personality. His Gospel is a masterpiece. His style is full of life and movement, clear, and never monotonous. The expression of his thoughts does not invariably conform to grammatical construction. Instead of grouping together, as Matthew does, several sayings of our Lord, he prefers to reproduce the discourses of Jesus united with the facts which called them forth, in the form of dialogues. Sometimes the Saviour's answer is not direct, but mysterious, furnishing the point of departure for a more extended discourse. In his narration he enters into the smallest details, always taking care to be both precise and accurate. The narratives of the woman of Samaria, of the cure of the man born blind, of the resurrection of Lazarus, of the washing of the feet, of the visit of Peter and John to the sepulchre, are all brief accounts so full of animation that they bring the facts vividly before the imagination. How incomparable is his description of the Passion, where the Saviour, the Pharisees, Pilate and Herod, move before the eyes of the reader and hold him entranced until the end of

a recital full of the most intense interest. The style and the descriptions are alike those of an eye-witness.

Never did an author more clearly reveal his identity in his works than the fourth Evangelist. When speaking of himself as the Apostle he does not give his name, but sometimes indicates himself by the phrases "another disciple," or "the disciple whom Jesus loved," or "he who" (at the Last Supper) "reclined upon the breast of Jesus." He gives even clearer indications. We read in chapter xix. 35—"And he that hath seen it" (*i.e.*, the blood and water flowing from the side of Christ) "beareth witness," in all which places he offers himself as an eye-witness of the life of Jesus (St. John i. 1, 3, 14; xix. 35). Either he who thus speaks is an impostor, or he was indeed a witness of what he relates. But it is not an easy matter to make out the holiest of all the writings which have ever proceeded from a human pen to have been a tissue of falsehoods. The reality of St. John's claim to have been a witness appears again in the position which he takes up with regard to the tradition received in the Church and handed down in the synoptics. He does not hesitate to rectify a misapprehension to which their narrative might have given birth; for example, when he says, "For John the Baptist had not yet been cast into prison" (iii. 24), evidently alluding to St. Matthew's statement, "But Jesus having learned that John had been cast into prison, withdrew into Galilee" (St. Matt. iv. 12); and to the parallel passage in St. Mark, from which it would have appeared that John had only returned from Judea into Galilee to begin there his ministry, after the arrest of St. John Baptist. He takes up a similarly independent position in regard of numerous sojourns at Jerusalem which are not mentioned in the synoptics, and also in the passages relating to the death of Christ, which were indicated by them without sufficient precision. This position, boldly assumed, in the presence of the synoptics, would be incomprehensible in any other witness than an Apostle who knew that his testimony would be received without hesitation by the Church. Short of actually writing the very letters of his own name, St. John could not have indicated it more clearly.

A further argument offers itself. The "disciple whom

Jesus loved" could be no other than the Apostle St. John. The disciple thus described is often mentioned in the narrative, but without any reference to his name. How does it come to pass that the author, who unhesitatingly names all the other Apostles, invariably covers himself with the veil of anonymity? It is remarkable too that all those portions of the narrative in which this unnamed disciple appears are certainly autobiographical. Such are the passages recounting his vocation to be the guardian of the Blessed Virgin (xix. 26), and the description of the way in which his faith in the Resurrection was formed, by seeing the shroud folded and laid aside (xx. 1-9). We find that those particulars which refer to the interior life of the disciple whom Jesus loved are related in the same chapter by the author in the third person singular, "He saw and believed" (ver. 8), whereas in what goes before (vers. 3, 4) and in what follows (ver. 9) he speaks in the third person plural of what refers to his companion St. Peter and to himself at the same time. From this we may conclude that Peter did not arrive at the same fulness of faith so promptly as St. John. That grace was obtained for him by another means, namely, by the apparition of Jesus, which is elsewhere narrated (St. Luke xxiv. 34). The author of the fourth Gospel was at the foot of the cross when Jesus expired (xix. 35). No other disciple is indicated in this Gospel as having been present at the crucifixion and agony of Jesus. The identity between the beloved disciple and the author of this Gospel is established by this circumstance; so that Baur himself is obliged to find a way of escape from the force of this evidence by stating that the author of the fourth Gospel is "one who tries to pass himself off as the beloved disciple"!

Finally, the author could only have been one of the sons of Zebedee. This is clear from the fact that not only John, but also his brother and their mother Salome, who all play a more or less important part in the synoptics, are none of them mentioned by name in the fourth Gospel. We notice this particularly in chapter xxi. 2. If this account in chapter xxi. is not from the author's pen, it is at least attributable to a tradition derived from him. But in this enumeration the sons of Zebedee are placed after the

other disciples who were present (Simon Peter, Thomas, and Nathaniel), whereas in all the lists of the Apostles John and James always appear at the head of the list with Peter and Andrew. This is a significant indication that one of the twelve was the author of this narrative; in other words, that it proceeds either from John or from James, the other son of Zebedee. But it could not have been written by the latter, because his death occurred at too early a date for it to have been possible for him to write it (Acts xii.).

Every other explanation of the origin of the fourth Gospel raises more difficulties than it solves. At what period in the second century, after the epoch in which St. John lived, could any one have been found capable of writing such a Gospel, of inventing such discourses as it contains, or of depicting such elevating and inspiring events as it records? The author has been called "The Great Unknown." But all eminent men of the second century are known, and we possess to this day some, at any rate, of their literary productions. The names of Ignatius, Polycarp, Papias, Justin occur to the mind at once. But how mediocre do they all appear in comparison with the sublimity of the author of the fourth Gospel. All these men, undoubtedly distinguished for piety, are vastly inferior to the author of the fourth Gospel from a literary point of view, and yet they shone as stars of the first magnitude in the firmament of the early Church. Is it, then, possible that so original and powerful a genius as he was who composed St. John's Gospel, could have remained wholly unknown and unappreciated in the midst of his contemporaries? Let those who deny the authenticity of St. John's Gospel produce, if they can, any other writer capable of its composition, and then explain how it came to pass that their "genuine author" left no trace of himself in the Church. The difficulty of attributing the fourth Gospel to any other writer than St. John, far surpasses all those with which the traditional belief is assailed.

It is a fact of easy proof that the fourth Gospel was directed to Christians already advanced in their knowledge of the events which marked the life and ministry of Jesus. How otherwise could the author have spoken of "the twelve" as he does (vi. 20), as persons already well known,

without a word of explanation respecting the mode of their election? How could he have omitted to account for the lapse of two months between the return of Jesus to Galilee (iv. 43), and his sojourn in Judea (v. 1), and an entire month between that sojourn and the multiplication of the loaves (vi. 1); or nearly eight months between the time of this last-named fact and the departure for Jerusalem: and finally, over two months from that journey and the following one to the feast of the Dedication (x. 22)? The author could not have failed to relate some of the occurrences during these intervals, had he not taken for granted that his readers were fully acquainted with all the facts of the Galilean ministry that filled up the vacant spaces in John's narrative and are told in the synoptics.

How came the author to write of Bethany as the home of Mary and her sister Martha, although he had not previously mentioned them? Why does he speak of Mary as the woman who had anointed the feet of the Saviour (xi. 2), without any preceding allusion to that event? Clearly, as we see throughout the book, the author considers that his readers already knew the history of Jesus, and that his main object in writing was simply to record certain facts or discourses left out in the other tradition, or else to present the facts in their true light by additional particulars. Moreover, those to whom this Gospel was addressed belonged to the educated classes. The author not only seeks to display the part taken by the Greeks in the ministry of Jesus (vii. 35; xii. 20), but he also furnishes explanations of Jewish manners (ii. 6; iv. 9; xix. 20), and in two places translates the Hebrew term "Messias" by the term "Christ." The Greeks, to whom he refers, were residents in Asia Minor, not in Greece proper; for it was chiefly in Asia that the theories were held which the Evangelist alludes to in his prologue, when inviting his readers to behold in the Person of Jesus the apparition of the Logos, the Divine Word.

The story of the Redeemer is presented in a special manner by St. John, with a definite end and object in view. This may be observed particularly in the closing declaration of the Evangelist—"These things are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of

God; and that believing, you may have life in His Name" (St. John xx. 31). His desire, evidently, was to confirm the faith of Christians. Such an intention responds to the necessities of that troublous time when the Gnostic heresies made their appearance. Gnostic dualism tended to cause the historic Christ to vanish in empty speculations. All the false systems of Gnosticism melted away before that simple utterance of which the whole Gospel is the demonstration—"The Word was made Flesh." The Logos of the philosophers, whom they perceived only through the clouds of speculation, became a real Being to be contemplated and possessed. It has often been pretended that the Jesus of the fourth Gospel was not a really human being, but certainly if there be a true Son of Man, it is Jesus as described by St. John. He seats Himself exhausted by fatigue; He groans on seeing the tears of His associates, and weeps before the tomb of His friend; His soul is troubled at the thought of His approaching sufferings (iv. 6; xi. 33; xii. 27). In the depth of his agony He confides His mother, as a sacred legacy, to the beloved disciple. The Jesus of St. John is assuredly one of flesh and blood.

The theodicy (*i.e.*, natural theology) embodied in the fourth Gospel has so little of a metaphysical character, that it forms the commencement to the Epistles of St. Paul, and the foundation of the Apocalypse. It cannot be attributed to any foreign influence. There is an absolute antithesis between the Incarnate Word of the fourth Gospel and the idea of matter identified with evil, which is the πρῶτον ψεῦδος of the whole of Alexandrian Gnosticism. If St. John borrowed from Gnosticism the formulæ, or terms, which were originally derived from the last books of the Old Testament, he never once introduced them into the discourses of Christ.

In addition to this, the author of the Gospel was a Palestinian Jew. Nothing could be more accurate than what he says of Judea, of the parts of the country, and the manners and customs of the people. The way in which he quotes from the Septuagint is in conformity with this origin. The conciseness of his style, often embodying expressions derived from current philosophy, agrees with

his sojourn in one of the centres of intellectual culture in Asia Minor, such as Ephesus. To remove him thence in order to pretend that he was "simply a second century Gnostic" is to forget his frank opposition to Oriental dualism, and the total absence in his writings of all hostility towards the religion of the Old Testament. He condemned only the degenerate Judaism of the synagogue which rejected Christ. It is in the fourth Gospel that we read that important statement, "Salvation is of the Jews" (iv. 22). We are bound, then, to conclude that the fourth Gospel provides us with a solid and faithful historical narrative, bearing the impress of an acknowledged individuality, and of a very marked and special religious conception.

Two of the chiefs of the school of negative criticism renounce the idea of a late date for this Gospel. Hilgenfeld considers it belongs to about 120; and Kuenen, who is, on this point, a negative critic (for he rejects the authenticity of the Gospel), places the date of its composition at about 110, only ten years after John's death. But how could it have been possible, at an epoch when so many men were living who had known John personally, that his friends as well as the whole Church should suffer themselves to be imposed upon by a fraudulent work not written by the Apostle whose disciples had been in his constant company up to the time of his death, but by some forger and impostor assuming his name? Ewald says—"In proportion as the attacks against St. John have become more violent, the truth has been more and more firmly established; at this moment the facts before us are such that no one, without consciously and obstinately choosing error in preference to truth, can have the hardihood to pretend that the fourth Gospel is not the work of St. John the Apostle."[1] "The reason," M. Wallon adds, "why Strauss seeks to discredit St. John's Gospel through those very marks and traces of the originality of its composition which have been recognised even by those to whom its evidence has been most embarrassing, is that he knew well St. John had shattered in pieces his whole system, and that he must destroy the Apostle's claim to be its author if

[1] "A l'occasion de la Vie de Jésus de Rénan," August, 1883

he himself is to maintain his own credit."[1] We may supplement this remark by the words of M. Godet—"Having arrived at the conclusion of this long review of all the objections raised by modern criticism against the unanimous tradition of the Church on the authenticity of the fourth Gospel, we must be allowed to draw attention to a curious phenomenon, which is not without psychological value in connection with this discussion. Is it not astonishing that every adversary of this Gospel seems to be struck forcibly by some one among these fourteen objections which appears to the other critics to be of small importance; while in comparison of his own objection that same man makes light of the objections of all the rest? We leave to the reader the task of explaining this fact, which has more than once provided us with food for reflection."[2]

And now what is to be thought of the differences or even contradictions which rationalists profess to discover between the four Gospels?

In the first place, let it be observed that a rigid uniformity between several writers in relating the same story would be a decisive objection against their authority. As a matter of fact, we never find two independent writers of a perfect accord in any long narration of a given event. What one states another omits. The same is true of all attempts at portraying the moral physiognomy of any one. Each writer is apt to be struck by some special trait, and it would be the height of absurdity and of ignorance also to expect absolute and complete agreement between several historians independently treating of any particular person or event. If we apply this argument to the Gospels we may add to it that the Evangelists wrote among different people, and with different ends in view. St. Matthew had to convince the Jews, St. Mark the Romans, and St. Luke the Greeks, whilst St. John wrote to convert the heretics. They were not to be expected, then, to accentuate the same features in their several portraits of Jesus, but each one to place special points in a position of prominence according to his particular object. Moreover, as they wrote one after another, and St. John many years later than the three

[1] "La Nouvelle Vie de Jésus du docteur Strauss," 1865.
[2] "Commentaire sur l'Évangile de saint Jean," vol. i., pp. 334, 335.

synoptics, it was natural that each one should endeavour to supplement rather than reproduce the story of the preceding one. These are four streams flowing from one source which reciprocally rectify one another, and in so doing confirm each other. Where shall we find two independent narratives of any event which, when microscopically dissected, are found to be alike? And if the great importance of these books causes minute attention to be paid to their smallest details, ought we, therefore, to forget that the proportionate importance between those details and the whole narrative is the same in the Gospel as in any other history? A difficulty such as would not cause us to reject the history of Greece or of Rome ought not to render the apostolic history unacceptable to us. The substantial and fundamental agreement between the historians of our Lord cannot be questioned. With all of them He is the same Personage, coming forth from among the people, a stranger to the sects and schools of thought of the time, teaching on His own authority alone. All declare Him to be the Messias foretold by the prophets, and the Son of God, and if St. John places His Divinity in higher relief, he does not tell us anything more certain on that point than we read in the synoptics when reporting the confession of Peter, or the answer made by Christ to Caiaphas. They all give the same principal facts of His life and death. The first three relate a great many of His miracles. St. John gives only three, but he supposes the knowledge of all. In each of the Gospels the object and end of the miracles is explained—it is to bear witness to the authority of Christ's mission. All exhibit the same standard of morality, and teach the same lessons of the necessity of humility, mortification, and especially charity. Everywhere in these narratives we note the same attitude, the same physiognomy, and, when the Evangelist speaks, it is an utterance proceeding from the same soul. If there are four Evangelists, there is but one Gospel. In order to produce such harmony, the subject of their story must have lived before their eyes, so as to go on living in their recollections, and in the memories of those they listened to or questioned. If they wrote independently of one another, how is the resemblance between them accounted for? If

they consulted or copied from one another, how can we account for so many divergencies? The answer is evident. The same model stood before them all, and each one faithfully but freely painted His portrait.

There is still more to be said. The "difficulty" arising from the differences between the Gospels, instead of diminishing their authority does, from a certain point of view, confirm and strengthen it. In order that stories differing so much in detail and so apparently contradictory in places could appear in succession, it must have been because their authority could not really be questioned or rejected. It is evident that they must have appeared bearing the impress of the authority whence they were derived, that is to say, that they belonged to the days of the Apostles and were written by those to whom they were attributed. "If," says M. Wallon, "the Gospels had been contestable, they would have been disputed from the very first." We will go still further than this and maintain that the co-existence of the Gospels *proves* that they belong to the times and to the authorship to which they are assigned. Dr. Norton has developed this argument with much force. If our Gospels were forged, how was the forgery accomplished? The four Gospels were either published together at one time or successively. Who maintains that they appeared simultaneously? Why were they four in number? Why, more particularly, did the first three exist with their differences and resemblances, the latter as inexplicable as the former? Did they appear one after the other? But if the first were accepted through a forgery, it is hardly conceivable that the remainder could possibly have been admitted. Had they exactly resembled the first they would have been useless. Had they been different from it, it would have been dangerous for the forger to utilise them. The orthodox Christians would have been the first to reject them; and our adversaries would thus have furnished us with weapons of defence from their own armoury. There are such diversities in our Gospels that one of them being once accepted, the admission of the rest would be exceedingly difficult, for the differences are not hidden away in obscure corners of the narrative. There are notable divergencies concerning time and place, with

differences as to the order in which the same facts are related within similar narratives. In the two genealogies difference seems to amount to contradiction. Yet the Gospels, notwithstanding, were admitted, though apparently contradicting each other; whilst the apocryphal writings intended to supplement them to satisfy popular curiosity were universally repudiated. This rejection of the apocryphal writings, and the simultaneous acceptance of the Gospels, prove that the latter bore from the first undoubted marks of the authority whence they were derived, that they were of the apostolic age, and were written by those to whom they have always been attributed.

IV.

To the question of the authenticity we must append that of the integrity of the Gospels. Since it is certain that these Scriptures belong to the apostolic age, it may be confidently assumed that no change has been made in them. Nor was any change possible. Their integrity was secured both by their widespread publicity from the beginning, and by the universal veneration accorded to them.

No work existing in numerous copies could be changed throughout in the same way, after having been circulated from its very origin, and translated into more than one language. Some time after the first century the Gospels were spread over the Roman world. They were translated into Latin, and we still possess the whole of the Gospels and several recensions of them in the ancient Latin version. About the same time they were translated also into Syriac in what is known as the Peshito version.[1] These primitive translations are faithful reproductions of the Greek versions which we also possess.

We can form a correct judgment of a primitive text by reference to the citations in the authors immediately following it. No other ancient books were so freely quoted. The passages taken from the Gospels by the

[1] Dr. Cureton discovered among papers bought in Egypt by Archdeacon Tatham in 1842 a Syriac version of the Gospels greatly differing from the Peshito. Three years ago two English persons found on Mount Sinai a text of the Gospels, probably of greater antiquity than the Curetonian version.

early Fathers have been counted. There are 18 in Justin Martyr, 469 in Irenæus, 577 in Clement of Alexandria, 1550 in Tertullian, and so on. If the Gospels had been lost, these quotations would have sufficed to reconstruct it almost entirely. Comparison with our text reveals the identity of our Gospels with those possessed by the early Christians. We are still more convinced of this by comparison with all the most ancient recensions of the Bible. Valuable discoveries have been made proving materially the preservation of the original sacred text. In London there is the *Codex Alexandrinus;* at Paris the Palimpsest of St. Ephrem in the National Library. Above all, there is the *Codex Sinaiticus* discovered in 1859 by Tischendorf in the monastery of Mount Sinai. It is a precious monument of the antiquity of our faith. This text, which was edited by a Protestant and published by the Czar of Russia, contains all those passages that confirm the Church's teaching on the primacy of St. Peter. The Sinaitic codex is a witness contemporary with the great persecutors. After 1500 years it comes forth from its seclusion to provide us with the text of the Gospels exactly as the first Christians possessed and read it. Comparison between all these ancient manuscripts with the copies and editions of the Scriptures of later dates proves that since the fourth century, at any rate, the sacred text has remained intact. The works of Origen carry back the demonstration of their integrity to the preceding centuries, for, about the year 240, when collating the most ancient versions, he was unable to discover any other variations than those existing in the actual manuscripts of that date.

This is historically certain—the Apostles, to provide for the needs of their converts, founded Churches and constituted bishops to preside over them. There were as many centres of the apostolic tradition, therefore, as there were Churches, but the same spirit animated them all. The Church ultimately fixed the canon. Origen says—"In all the Churches under heaven there are but four Gospels which are uncontested." Papias composed a book in five volumes drawn from "authentic sources," but the Church has not taken any account of it. She has equally ignored the stories

added to St. Matthew in the "Gospel according to the Hebrews," and she has rejected all the apocryphal Gospels. We are, therefore, a long distance away from those "little booklets" of M. Rénan, which, he says, every one carried under his cloak, and jotted down any items of news he picked up, along with his own private impressions. We must admit the jealous care with which the Church guarded the purity of the doctrine entrusted to her. St. Paul wrote to Timothy, "Keep the good thing committed to thy trust by the Holy Ghost" (2 Tim. i. 14); and to the Galatians, "Though we or an angel from heaven preach a Gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema" (Gal. i. 8); and to the Thessalonians, "Stand fast; and hold the traditions which you have learned, whether by word or by our epistle" (2 Thess. ii. 14); and St. John, ordinarily so gentle in his tone, in concluding his Apocalypse, menaces with the most terrible chastisements those who should add to or take from his book (Apoc. xxii. 19). St. Clement of Rome wrote to the Corinthians in the same sense. Eusebius has preserved the text of Papias in which the latter relates with what care he acquired information as to the utterances of Peter, Andrew, Philip, and Polycarp; and in his letter to the Philippians he congratulates them on having kept the true faith. St. Justin declares that "to change the letters of the Apostles is a crime greater than the adoration of the golden calf." The act of surrendering the Sacred Books to the heathen was, in the eyes of the early Christians, a crime comparable to apostacy, and those who were guilty of it were termed *traditores*—"traitors." Moreover, Divine Providence granted astonishing longevity to many of those who bore witness to our Lord, as if to preserve the tradition concerning Him by living witnesses until the time when the increased number and spread of the witnesses made any alteration in the sacred text impossible. St. John and St. Polycarp in the East, and St. Simeon at Jerusalem, each attained more than one hundred years of age. Many who saw the miracles wrought by our Lord were alive when St. Quadratus offered his "Apology" to the Emperor Hadrian. These witnesses agree among themselves, and are in harmony with the teaching of the Fathers. No change or difference of any consequence has

been discovered in any of them. We thus possess a traditional fount and source which is historically unique and unexampled. It is at the same time varied, derived from numerous sources, observant, unhesitating, and enlightened. If such guarantees as these do not suffice for the most exacting critic, what more can be required? M. Augustin Thierry rightly said—"The Christian tradition is four times more reliable than profane history."

As, in the present age, it is customary to refer to the sources of things, historical criticism has applied itself to examining the Christian origins. This criticism, which has demolished, root and branch, so many old historical fables, has simply strengthened the Christian narrative. During the past half-century the Roman soil has been dug over with indefatigable diligence and a great spirit of enterprise, with the object of discovering the source of the first Christian institutions. From this process, the history of the Christian origins which is written on the imperishable pages of the stone monuments has come forth intact and rejuvenated, just as tradition had handed it down to us, confirmed and strengthened on many points, but injured or weakened in none. The result is that we are not separated from the sources of Christianity, as we might otherwise have thought, by forty generations of witnesses. The witnesses of the first centuries still live before our eyes, and we hold direct communication with them. Under the dust of centuries, accumulated in the Catacombs, we have recovered a picture of the life, thought, and worship of the early Christians. The labours of de Rossi have, as Cardinal Pie says, created a new department in theology."[1]

The Gospels, and indeed the whole of the New Testament, are, therefore, in full possession of the situation. Their date reaches back to the first century of the Christian era—in fact from the time when the stone was rolled away from the sepulchre. They have triumphantly accompanied the march of the world until

[1] See also the valuable work by Provost Northcote and Bishop Brownlow entitled "Roma Sotteranea," which gives a clear and unanswerable account of the faith of the early Church, showing it to be identical with that of the Church of to-day.

the present day, mingling so closely with the life, thought, and acts of men, families, and nations, that it has become impossible to separate the one from the other, to isolate mankind from the Gospel, or to invent any reasonable hypothesis to account for the invention of this admirable testament, written with the blood of martyrs and with Divine tears, for the benefit of the vast human family. The remembrance of the Christ of the Gospels is preserved, not only in these recitals penetrated with holy love, but also in the very life of every Christian. The Christian soul is nourished by the great facts of the Gospel story. The martyrs died in attestation of their truth, and the early Christians who survived during the persecutions concealed themselves, in order to carry on their worship and preserve their faith, in the sombre Catacombs wherein the bodies of their martyred dead were laid.

In spite of the lapse of centuries, and notwithstanding many dangers and conflicts, the Gospels are with us still, exhibiting sure and indisputable signs of the times and places in which they were written, along with unmistakable indications of the sincerity of their authors, as unbelievers are obliged to acknowledge. Criticism by sceptics is for the most part disguised controversy or systematic and determined negation. But it remains certain that, in spite of all discussion, the more we know and understand the Gospels, the more we realise their indestructibility and impregnability in presence of all attacks. Their authenticity is evident, and their integrity inviolate. We recognise the apostolic writers in everything they have written, and as we read each page, however much its authenticity may have been contested, we feel constrained to say, "This page is the author's, for it could be the work of no one else."

The conclusion at which we arrive is inevitable. Since these accounts are genuine history, Jesus Christ is certainly God. Such is the conlusion of St. John, and it is one which our own reason and sound sense compel us to admit. It would be to no purpose for any man to contend against evidence such as we have adduced. If, before being convinced, we demand extraordinary proofs, we are more exacting than Strauss, the most incredulous of men. We

must conduct our inquiry before the tribunal of God. A sincere and serious man, when he comes to ponder over these things, will acknowledge in the words of Rousseau, that "the facts told respecting Socrates which nobody dreams of doubting, are far less well attested than those respecting Jesus Christ." Such a man will end by being a Christian.

CHAPTER III.

THE INTERPRETATIONS OF THE GOSPEL.

"We claim as a counter-proof the right to criticise criticism."—SCHÉRER, "Mélanges et critique religieuse."

"They say miracles are past; and we have our philosophical persons, to make modern and familiar, things supernatural and causeless. Hence is it that we make trifles of terrors; ensconcing ourselves into seeming knowledge, when we should submit ourselves to an unknown fear."—SHAKESPEARE, "All's well that ends well," Act II., Scene 3.

THE facts which we have recounted are so marvellous that incredulity in its attempt to get rid of them will not allow them to be interpreted by any clear and decisive hypothesis, such as that of the supernatural, or of imposture, or of hallucination.

"In problems of so elevated an order," says M. Rénan, "we must reject equally a supernatural hypothesis and any natural hypothesis so simple as those which please the eighteenth century, but reduce everything to the ordinary proportions of a fact either of imposture or of credulity. I refuse to receive a clear and definite analysis of Jesus, its clearness would be the best proof of its insufficiency. The essential point is not so much to be convinced that Jesus Christ has been explained, as to feel sure that, with more certain information, He may be intelligibly explained in the future."[1]

M. Rénan, then, sees very well that the ordinary hypotheses are inadmissible. He rejects imposture and hallucination at the risk of contradicting himself in his "Vie de Jésus." He takes refuge behind a cloud of words to explain the great Christian facts. "In order to comprehend them," he says, "we must be able to

[1] "Liberté de penser," April, 1847.

penetrate the mysteries of the individual conscience, and understand the grand imaginative instincts of humanity."[1]

No hypothesis, then, which is not supernatural, can account for the supernatural facts of the Gospel, since M. Rénan himself is forced to reject all others. He feels quite satisfied that good sense is on the side of such rejection. Nevertheless we shall discuss those same natural hypotheses which M. Rénan calls "too simple," and which are yet the only clear hypotheses outside the supernatural worthy of notice. We shall begin by criticising the mythism of Strauss, because this system also tends to destroy belief in the authenticity of the Sacred Books. Our chapter on the authenticity of the New Testament will be strengthened by such examination. We shall endeavour to show by a detailed account of some of the great miracles of the Gospel that neither mythism nor naturalism suffice to explain them. After this, we propose to analyse the theory, or rather the various theories, advocated by M. Rénan. We shall see how our modern adversaries adhere to the old stock objections accumulated by the first heresiarchs. We shall endeavour to show them to be in contradiction with themselves and with one another.

One of the leaders of the exegesis of doubt, M. Schérer, demands from us, as a counter-proof, a criticism of his criticism. This we willingly grant. These two words furnish us with a programme, which we readily follow, as it will enable us to demonstrate the weakness of the position taken up by our adversaries.

We have shown that the Gospels are contemporary with the events which they record, that they are plain and positive in their narrations, and that all humanity, until these latter days, understood them literally. We adduced the most decisive proofs of their authenticity, proofs, too, that ought to be abundantly sufficient for any man of good faith. But the core of the discussion is not so much the authenticity of the Sacred Books as of the miracles which they relate. Miracles are not necessary, therefore these books are false. We reply—"Miracles are necessary as a sign of the presence of God among us. Christ, to prove His Divinity, wrought miracles, and it was impossible

[1] "Études d'histoire religieuse."

for His historians to pass them over in silence. Their end was precisely that of their Divine Master—to prove the Divinity of Jesus by a truthful historical narrative. Moreover, these miracles furnish us with the best possible explanation of the great revolution introduced by Christianity, namely, the positive intervention of Almighty God.

Let us, however, examine the various hypotheses which are supposed to explain the supernatural facts of the Gospel, apart from the personal intervention of God. We shall prove them to be inadmissible, and that without the Christian thesis there is positively no satisfactory explanation of these well-attested facts.

I.

The historical reality of the Person of Jesus has stamped itself upon all classes of minds, at all times, with the most irresistible force; and, among the bitterest enemies of Christianity, no one has dared to contest it. Only at a very recent epoch, that is, in the eighteenth century, did men take it into their heads to do this. Bayle and all the Encyclopædists resolutely deny the reality of the historic fact. Dupuy sees nothing in it but a myth. According to him, Jesus was the Sun, and the Apostles the twelve signs of the Zodiac! These philosophers knew very well that to admit the history of Jesus at all would involve acceptance of the supernatural. Hence their passionate negations.

The first theory propounded to explain away the Gospels was the mythical theory. The Gospels are *the result of slow popular elaboration*, and consist of a collection of legends arranged long after the epoch to which they refer.

According to Strauss, there is nothing to demonstrate the authenticity of the Gospels. Attested about the year 130 in a vague fashion, they were cited with precision only twenty years later. Time is required for the elaboration of legends. Given the above dates, there was time enough; more was not necessary. In the course of an entire century, imagination, excited by religious sentiment, could invent and embellish at its leisure, and turn legend and fable into history.

We protest against the calm audacity of Dr. Strauss. He devotes the last five chapters of his "Introduction" to establishing his proposition that the character of *myth* can and ought to be applied to the Gospel story. His argument, despite his great erudition, is nullified by these words, written by himself—"At the time of Jesus the age of myth had long passed away, and the Jewish nation had for a like period taken up the custom of writing its own history."[1] *De ore tuo te judico*, is our reply to Strauss—"Out of thy own mouth I judge thee." It is impossible to close our eyes to the want of honest seriousness in a criticism which applies to Jesus Christ, at mere caprice, an *a priori* system of interpretation, applicable, according to Strauss's own admission, only to earlier ages. "It is not, therefore, the life of Jesus which gave rise to the system. It is the system which, to save its own existence, is obliged to invent a life of Jesus."[2] "Because the religion of the Greeks and Romans had a mythology," says M. Wallon, "Strauss must contrive one for the Christian religion too; and thus a great historical fact, which happened in the reign of Augustus, and which, of course, had from the first both its apostles and its opponents, is transformed into a myth, as if it were some obscure tradition that had lost itself in the night of time."[3]

Christianity did not reach us from Sinai, but from Calvary. It did not come into existence at the time of Moses, but under the Roman Empire; not in the dim twilight of the history of humanity, but rather in its full meridian. Christianity appeared in an age of easy communication between races who were subjects of the same empire. It was an age of publicity, of sceptical philosophy and incredulity, so that the miracle of its establishment not only challenged the investigations of historical scepticism, but triumphed over them.

Like Bayle and Dupuy, Strauss inaugurated his system because he understood perfectly that if the authenticity

[1] "Vie de Jésus," introduction, p. 52. The Jews have never been guilty of such literary dishonesty as the denial of the historical fact of the existence and work of Jesus of Nazareth. Their theory is that He was an impostor, who caused the ruin and dispersion of their nation.

[2] H. Perreyve, *Correspondant*, May, 1859.

[3] "L'examen de la Nouvelle Vie de Jésus du docteur Strauss."

of the New Testament were admitted, the existence of the supernatural must be admitted also. Naturalism seemed to him ridiculous and impossible. In spite of his apparent independence, independence suits Strauss but ill. What we learn from his book is by no means the real life of Jesus. In place of the Christ known in history, who disappears from view in a mist of legend, there arises a personified abstraction. Doubtless Strauss supposes that "one Jesus" really lived; but when we come to close quarters, the positive results of his criticism amount to no more than this. After having as much as possible clouded over the real and living landscape before him, he does not deign to put anything else in its place. As regards the work that Jesus of Nazareth accomplished, or the opinion we are to form of His character and life, or the place that He occupies in the general and religious history of humanity—such simple questions as these Strauss seems altogether to ignore. A brilliant legend surely calls for some great fact as its starting-point; above all things, it requires time for its development. Now, in the four great Epistles of St. Paul, which are uncontested, we find within about twenty years after the death of Jesus, while His contemporaries were still living, an outline or sketch of the life of Christ closely resembling that given in the Gospels, and certainly as different as possible from the one produced by Strauss under the pretence of being the result of his historical studies. The Christian tradition was so firmly established, twenty years after the ascension of Jesus Christ, that St. Paul was content with a simple appeal to it: he neither developed nor discussed it. Here we touch the solid rock which lies below the moving quicksand of legend. It cannot possibly be admitted that, within this short interval, a tradition so clear and definite should have come into being by means of the spontaneous generation of a perfectly fantastical mythology. We must not forget that Paul lived in close intimacy with the immediate disciples of Jesus, that he encountered at Jerusalem Peter, James, and John (Gal. ii. 9), and that he often visited that metropolis of the primitive Church. On the very scene of the evangelical history he could interrogate its first witnesses. He lived in the midst of the five hundred

Christians who had seen the risen Christ (1 Cor. xv. 6). Thus we are carried back to the very time of Jesus Christ, and the century required by Strauss for the formation of the Christian myth is an absolute blank.

Furthermore, it cannot possibly be admitted that a growing myth crossed the seas, founded a great Church in the very capital of the world, and roused the cruel wrath of Nero. In fact, as we have already said, in the first years of the second century the new religion had not only largely increased upon Jewish soil, but had also spread over the Roman Empire.

It had grown into sufficient importance in Asia Minor for Pliny the Younger, when Imperial Legate in Bithynia, to refer to it in a celebrated letter to the Emperor. He recognises the fact that the memory and adoration of Christ are the very soul of the religion which bears His name. *Carmenque Christo quasi Deo dicere*—"They sing hymns to Christ as to a God."[1] Suetonius, the historian of the Cæsars, asserts that the name of Jesus caused a ferment of agitation among the Jews. *Judæos, impulsore Christo, assidue tumultuantes Roma expulit*—"Claudius expelled from Rome the Jews who were always causing disturbance concerning the man called Christ."[2]

From the text of Tacitus, when speaking of the first persecution, it is clear that Christianity, towards the year 65, had formed itself into a vast body, incapable of being taken by surprise, a party sufficiently numerous to attract the attention, and draw down upon itself the animadversion, of society at large. We find that this body had for its head one Christ, put to death in the reign of Tiberius by the procurator Pilate. *Auctor nominis ejus Christus, Tiberio imperitante, per procuratorem Pontium Pilatum, supplicio affectus erat*—"The author of this name 'Christian' was one Christ, who was executed in the reign of Tiberius, by order of the procurator Pontius Pilate."[3] The religion of the Crucified was, then, established at Rome thirty years after the date of His death.

Further still, there were divisions among some members

[1] Pliny, Liv. x., Ep. 98.
[2] Suetonius, "Claudius," 25.
[3] "Annales," xv. 44.

of the growing Church. This appears from several chapters of the Acts of the Apostles. If, as the school of Strauss would have us believe, the Gospels are only the result of a slow popular elaboration, the Apostles would have been represented therein under a very different character. They were the heroes of the nascent Christianity. Popular imagination would have effaced the memory of their weaknesses, and would have transformed them into beings of grand and marvellous heroism. They would have appeared in the guise of champions and enthusiasts, not of men without energy and without courage. If books, made up of many compilations and modelled upon legends, had traced such a portrait of the Apostles as is presented to us in the Gospels, such books could never have been accepted by the popular sentiment which they so greatly shocked and contradicted; never would the faithful, who had known the Apostles only at the period of their lives when they were martyrs, have considered these books authentic, still less inspired.

If the Apostles wrote nothing, how is it possible that a hundred years later the books of the New Testament were composed and accepted without dispute as their work? If it is objected that the Apostles did write something, but that their works contained no trace of the miraculous, how can it be maintained that, in the next century, their real writings were, without any one knowing it, entirely transformed, and replaced by others of which the supernatural formed the groundwork? But were the disciples of the Apostles ignorant of their real writings? Were not the Gospels read every Sunday to the assemblies of the faithful in the time of St. Justin? At the beginning of the second century was there not a Latin as well as a Syriac version of them? In a word, do we not find the whole of the evangelical doctrine, and, indeed, the entire New Testament, recorded in all the writings of the most ancient Fathers, such as St. Clement of Rome, St. Ignatius, St. Polycarp, St. Justin, St. Irenæus, Tertullian, and Origen? There is nothing more opposed to the unanimous testimony of history than the statement that the principal facts of the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles were "unknown to the first century," or that "the history of Jesus Christ and

His Apostles was entirely transformed in the second." If miracles had not been attributed to the Saviour from the very beginning, how could His Divine mission have been believed? How could the first Christians have so courageously confessed his Divinity? Evidently the Gospels were not the impersonal productions of the first generations of Christians. Generations do not produce books, though they may produce authors. Now, an anonymous author, whoever he might have been, could not have imposed upon the world a legendary compilation without the assent, in itself impossible, of the apostolic Churches; unless, indeed, we can suppose the equally impossible suppression of all record of such a general outcry as must certainly have greeted a work so completely subversive of all primitive tradition.[1]

Mr. Edgar Quinet, criticising the first "Vie de Jésus," defends the Scriptures in a style not to be surpassed. After having denounced the attitude of Strauss, and remarked on "the language, so grim, dry, and precise, which through 1500 pages never relaxes for a single instant," he continues —"Another reproach which I have to cast upon this work is that the truly prodigious intelligence and erudition displayed in these books seem, as it were, to deprive them of every appearance of reality. In the midst of this absolute negation of true life, one is tempted to ask whether one's own most vivid impressions, one's very breath, life, and soul, are not also, perchance, but a copy of some wild text of the book of fate; and whether one's own existence may not come to be called in question as a plagiarism from some unknown story.

"What a multitude of questions remain for us to examine! For instance, whether the epoch of Christ was a fitting one for the invention of a new mythology; how far the science of Alexandria exercised a controlling influence over the imaginations of Jerusalem, a point which involves an examination of the spirit of contemporary criticism in the Roman world; whether ninety years allowed sufficient time for establishing an entirely new and fabulous tradition; whether the tone of the apocryphal Gospels is not very

[1] See Wallon's "La croyance due à l'Évangile"; De Pressensé's "Jésus Christ."

distinct from that of the canonical books; whether the book of the Acts, regarded as true history, does not present a narrative analogous to those of the Evangelists; whether in these primitive monuments the parables have not been expressly separated from the narrative, and thus the line of demarcation between history and allegory has been drawn by the writers themselves? Can the preface to the Gospel according to St. Luke, which is admitted to be so reasonable, so methodical, so philosophical, be merely the introduction to a collection of legends? Do not the Epistles of St. Paul bear on them so clear an evidence of reality that its light is reflected back upon the preceding epoch? And their author, too—is he not like one of ourselves, so near to us that we seem to touch him with our hands; does he not plead for the truth, and for the historical actuality of the personages whom we cannot reach except through him? All these points need close investigation. When viewed from the standpoint of a sceptical author, Christianity would appear to be an effect without a cause. How could the despoiled figure of Christ, a phantom of which no appreciable vestige any longer remains, some half-formed insect, as it were, hidden amongst the dust of tradition—how could this have dominated like a living power over all succeeding ages? We see the whole moral universe revolutionised, but the prime mover in so great a change is nowhere to be found. If the New Testament presents to us no spontaneity of action, whence did fresh life originate? Is modern civilisation to be accounted a mere plagiarism? If the New Law be only the reproduction of ancient law, if the spirit of creation has not vivified any part of it, if the miracle of the renovation of the world has not taken place, then what are we ourselves doing here, and what is our place within the dead walls of this ancient city? That which really brings out the personal greatness of Christ is not so much the Gospel, as the progressive movement and spirit of the times which succeeded it."[1]

All that has been just said applies equally to the second work of Strauss on Jesus Christ.[2] Doubtless, grown wiser by criticism, this author now professes to determine what

[1] Edgar Quinet, *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1st Dec., 1878.
[2] Of 1864.

is known for certain about the "Teacher of Nazareth," but he has succeeded only in substituting self-contradiction for fiction. M. Wallon has estimated the value of this work in terms which admit no answer: "Behold the grand discoveries which we owe to 'The New Life of Jesus.' There is nothing here which we do not find in the former Life. Nay, I am wrong. There *is* something new here, if not in its estimate of facts, at least in the spirit of the theory propounded. Strauss, in his former work, regarded what he calls 'the myth of the life of Jesus' as the product of slow popular elaboration. Certain facts took place, were magnified by traditionary growth, and at length one fine day were, nobody knows how, committed to writing. But Baur himself has pointed out how irreconcilable is the idea of a myth with the facts recorded in the Gospel. By what means, then, is this theory maintained in presence of a Gospel so evidently descriptive of a distinct person as is that of St. John? Strauss adheres to his theory and to his published utterances; but is he inclined to be just to the criticism of the Master of Tübingen?

"He speaks of 'grave and deliberate fictions,' of 'myths written and compiled in separate portions, according to a pre-determined plan of the Evangelists.' These Evangelists borrowed not only from the Jewish Bible, but also from Greek mythology, from Roman history, from Plutarch, and from Suetonius. But Suetonius certainly never described his Cæsars as saints, neither is it seriously to be believed that he wished to make gods of them. The Evangelists were more skilful in the art of deification.

"It is, above all, on the Gospel of St. John that Strauss's utterances are most remarkable. He tries to turn against the Evangelist, as we have already seen, the subtle proofs of originality which are recognised by those even who are the most embarrassed by his clear testimony. He knows full well that St. John is a hatchet which cuts at the root of the mythical hypothesis, and that he must, at any cost, either destroy this Gospel or abandon his theory. But it is not the fourth Evangelist only who is accredited with this deliberately planned fraud. The synoptics themselves possess an erudition hitherto unsuspected, and St. Matthew, by cleverly combining the true and the false elements in

his narrative, consciously creates a myth! Of a truth, if the Evangelists had really acted as Dr. Strauss supposes, their Gospels would strongly resemble his 'Life of Jesus.' It is plain, however, that no resemblance of the kind exists."[1]

By no possibility, then, can we deny the existence of Jesus. Christ is not a legendary personage, like the demi-gods and heroes of Hellenic antiquity. His history is not, like that of Gautama Buddha, hidden under the grotesque fables invented by Hindoo imagination. There is no question here of the time of Homer; we are dealing with the age of Augustus. Can we conceive that a myth was at that period invented, and palmed off as history and genuine literature? This supposed "myth" was evidently accepted for true history, even by those who engaged in its fabrication, at Jerusalem, at Antioch, at Ephesus, and at Rome; for Christianity was preached everywhere, at the same time, by the Apostles. Let rationalists believe in such an impossibility if they choose, we may be allowed to show ourselves less easily convinced. Jesus and Mahomet are the only two religious founders who have lived at an historical epoch. The public life of the former was witnessed by thousands of His compatriots, who were men of a cold, sceptical spirit, careful to change none of the usages and beliefs of their ancestors, united by commerce and education with the Hellenic world, then the most civilised upon earth; holding constant intercourse with the refined and sarcastic Greeks. He lived in presence of the Roman magistrates and officials, who were representatives of the most powerful central government that ever existed, the action of which was intimately connected with the great drama of Calvary.

"Furthermore," writes Charles Magnin, "there are two things equally admirable in the Gospel, viz., the precepts and the preceptor. Be as subtle as you please; controvert

[1] "La Nouvelle Vie de Jésus du docteur Strauss." We may add that the second "Vie de Jésus," though it possesses many of the vices of the former Life, has none of its better qualities. Sometimes the style of criticism, narrow indeed, but penetrating and serious in the first work, degenerates here into combinations as useless as they are weak; and it may well be said that if the adversaries of the mythical theory have made a breach in its walls, its own apostle has himself chosen to consummate its destruction.

texts; take for granted that frauds, interpolations, and omissions exist; maintain even with Strauss that these histories are nothing but a collection of legends, allegories, and myths—but still you must always admit that legends, allegories, and myths do not grow out of nothing! Whence, then, did these particular ones arise? You reply, 'Out of the popular imagination.' But the people can fill their creations only with the ideas and sentiments that are habitual to them. Their legendary heroes take the shape of their own ideas. Now, do we recognise the least trace of the Hebrew character, so hard and inexorable as it is, in the charity which the parable of the good Samaritan reveals, or in the mercy extended to the adulterous woman? Can we reasonably suppose that the Jewish imagination would have felt any satisfaction in originating the strange myth of their Messias, the Son of David, being born in a stable, and dying on a cross, for the express purpose, apparently, of wounding the dearest and most indestructible hopes of their own nation? Certainly not; for it is without precedent that popular legends should be opposed in the most direct manner to the opinions of the people from whom they draw their origin. It may perhaps be said, as a certain school of thought has already advanced, that the doctrine of Jesus Christ is the collective and successive work of a sect of anonymous reformers, concealing behind a fictitious name the perilous novelties of the belief they desired to spread abroad. But the blood shed by them for their faith sufficiently refutes this weak and frivolous hypothesis. Men die only for a cause worth living for, never for a mere boastful venture."[1]

The originality of Jesus Christ, which testifies so strongly to His personal existence, shows itself in different characteristic ways. He is, from the first, a Teacher, an original Master. His style of speech distinguishes Him from all the other doctors of the law. When He wishes to proclaim a truth, He does not commence by bringing forward a series of contrary opinions by way of comparison. He speaks direct to the point—"It has been said to you," or "You have heard it said," "But I say to you, it is thus or thus." The people promptly recognised this difference, and charac-

[1] *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 19th April, 1855.

terised it by acknowledging that He "taught as one having power, and not as the scribes" (Mark i. 22). It was only when he wished to give clearer meaning to a received opinion that Christ referred to any anterior teaching. He sought not to instruct or persuade His hearers by the aid of disputations, of skilful inductions, or of learned deductions. He did not submit His teaching to the appreciation of His audience. He demanded faith in His words as the most absolute condition for understanding religious truth. He affirms. He never casts about or hesitates. As for objections, they meet at once with a peremptory reply. If these objections are sincere, or arise from a halting faith, He affirms with greater energy what He has already stated. If they arise from an error of judgment, but still are sincere, He explains Himself in a way which leaves no room for the slightest equivocation. If they are uttered against good faith, He obliges His interlocutors to confess their fault. Under all circumstances, the calm boldness of His interrogations, the justice and force of His answers, the promptitude and pertinency of His retorts, attest that His mind, always master of itself, was never obscured by any of the emotions caused by surprise.

Again, the religious conception of Jesus was absolutely new, and altogether opposed to the exclusiveness of the Jews. In their estimation pagans did not deserve to be enlightened by the true religion. They could not imagine a Jewish teacher troubling Himself to try to convert the Gentiles. There is a text in St. John which shows how extraordinary this design of Jesus seemed to the Jews. Jesus had said—"You shall seek Me, and shall not find Me: and where I am, thither you cannot come." The Jews therefore said among themselves—"Whither will He go, that we shall not find Him? Will He go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles?" (St. John vii. 35). This idea of Jesus, then, was an absolutely original one in a Jew, and is a strong proof of Christ's personality.

It will, however, be a sufficient refutation of mythism to prove that, according to the New Testament, Jesus Christ lived an intensely personal life, and that no

historical personage has ever been so much contradicted or so much loved as He.[1] When we see how Jesus stirred to its very depths the Jewish society of His own time, it is difficult to maintain that His personality is a creation of disordered brains. We have before us a man who excited considerable opposition against Himself, and the closing scene of whose life was that of an executed criminal. It must be admitted that these are circumstances and central facts by no means favourable for the elaboration of an heroic legend. Jesus did not attain to the position of a Messias and a thaumaturgus silently or secretly. Christianity was founded in combat and struggle. Simeon had said of Jesus that He would be set for a sign that should be contradicted (St. Luke ii. 34). Every act, every word of Christ, was in fact malevolently contradicted. He cured the paralytic, those born blind, the incurably sick; and, because He chose the Sabbath day for this good work, they said that He violated the law of God. When He expelled devils He was accused of doing this in the name of Beelzebub, the prince of devils. He was called a madman, a seducer, a blasphemer, a demoniac, a Samaritan, one possessed. The doctors of the law drew near only to malign Him or take Him by surprise. The seventh chapter of St. John is sufficient of itself to exclude the mythical hypothesis—"And there was much murmuring among the multitude concerning Him. For some said, He is a good man. And others said, No, but He seduceth the people. Yet no man spoke openly of Him for fear of the Jews." No one could feel certain whether his neighbour was a partisan or an enemy of Christ. When the death of Jesus was resolved upon in full council, observe how the matter was formulated. "Not on the festival day, lest perhaps there should be a tumult among the people" (St. Matt. xxvi. 5). The Pharisees came to Pilate and said—"Sir, we have remembered that that seducer said, whilst He was yet alive, After three days I will rise again." The people in Jerusalem asked—"Is not this He whom they seek to kill?" And Caiphas decided, after the resurrection

[1] See "La police autour de la personne de Jésus Christ," par l'abbé A. Lémann. Lyons, 1895.

of Lazarus—"It is expedient for you that one man should die for the people."

But side by side with and in face of His enemies, Christ had also His warm supporters, who went with Him even to death; and Peter assured Him, "Although all shall be scandalised in Thee, I will never be scandalised. . . . Though I should die with Thee, I will not deny Thee." St. Thomas likewise cried out, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him"; and the Magdalen complained with sighs, "We know not where they have laid Him." The emissaries of the Sanhedrim, charged to take Him prisoner, did not dare to seize Him, despite the formal orders they had received, and so returned cowed by His eloquence. "Never did man speak like this Man!" they declared. These different details show what an ascendency Jesus Christ had gained over the people, and how true it is that no man has ever inspired his contemporaries with such love or with such hatred as He did. "Jesus feared not to mix with the crowd, to join with the Pharisees and expose Himself to their crafty attacks. The hero of sanctity was equally the hero in action."[1] Christ's personality is the most dominant in all history. No man has ever swayed the passions of the multitude as He did; of this we have proof in the fact that even after His death He continued to be an object of scandal. Christianity had scarcely been born before it divided the world into martyrs and their executioners. The Gentiles opposed the word of Jesus by every manner of cruelty practised upon His followers. The Jews in Rome said to St. Paul—"We desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest, for, as concerning this sect, we know that it is gainsayed everywhere (Acts xxviii. 22).

The foundations of our religion have likewise been attacked by those who once made profession of Christianity. The perfidious Arian denied the Divinity of Jesus; the senseless Marcionite denied His Humanity; the Nestorian divided His Person; the Eutychian confused His two Natures. It is impossible to imagine any error that has

[1] Challemel-Lacour, "Discours de réception à l'Académie française," 25th January, 1894.

not already been maintained regarding Jesus Christ.[1] Opposition has been maintained all along the course of centuries. No individual has been brought into contact with Christ and yet remained cold or indifferent; he must range himself either on one side or the other. Sooner or later, when the busy rush of human affairs is past, when empty pleasures have produced their result of weariness, Jesus presents Himself before us, saying, as He did once to His disciples—"Whom think you that I am?" We can withdraw ourselves from Him only by denying Him. But in that case we could not fail to hate Him. We become jealous of Christ, as possessing a Power which makes itself felt, a Tenderness determined to conquer us. This is a phenomenon in history. We do not feel hatred even towards those men who have sometimes been the disgrace of the human race; Jesus Christ alone is detested. In requital for this He has raised up to Himself generations of adoring and faithful friends. He is beloved in the poor, who are His images; He is beloved as never was father or mother, sister or brother, nor any other being, even though loved with the most passionate transports of earthly affection. Our love has enthroned Him on a pedestal formed out of the ruins of every other object of our love. "As the standard of our contradictions!" cries Rénan, "Thou shall be set up to be the ensign around which a battle shall rage ere long with terrible ferocity. A thousand times more beloved since Thy death than during the days of Thy pilgrimage here below, Thou wilt become so truly the corner-stone of humanity that to wrench Thy Name from the world will be to shake that world to its very foundations!"[2] Before Christ could have been, during the whole course of time, always either exalted or mocked by all, He must have led an intensely personal life. But this is all the more astonishing in the case of one who no longer can wield the magic of His living glance, or the force of His eloquence, wherewith to captivate the minds and enslave the hearts of men. This is a unique fact,

[1] Bossuet, "Jésus Christ objet de scandale." 1st Sermon for the Second Sunday of Advent.

[2] "Vie de Jésus," p. 426.

proving beyond question that Christ was no myth, but a personality pre-eminently definite and real.[1]

II.

The most rational theory concerning Christ, and the simplest, if we exclude Christian belief, is that which accuses Him of deception. According to this, so far from His being God, He is simply an impostor! Such is the theory of one of the earliest enemies of Christianity, the pagan philosopher Celsus, whose thesis has been revived in the last century by the German philosopher Lessing. It has undoubtedly some plausibility about it, although it is not tenable. An infidel at Brunswick, perceiving the feebleness of all other explanations on the subject of Christ, said to one of his friends, by name Knoblauch, who was an upholder of those more generally given—"You will get out of the difficulty very easily by saying that no one can believe story-tellers like these; that they are, without exception, consummate liars, and that all arguments in favour of their veracity are so much beating of the air."[2] We certainly have here something more sensible and decisive than the nebular theory of the "mysteries of the spontaneous conscience" and "the grand imaginative instincts of humanity."

Jesus claimed to be God: if He is not God, then He is indeed an impostor. He would, on that supposition, have invented the most terrible lie which history has ever recorded—a lie enacted for the space of three years, carried out with an unparalleled tenacity of purpose, and persevered in to the very last: when He was in the actual

[1] "I have stirred multitudes to passionate emotion; but for that my presence was needed, and the electricity of my glance. Now that I am chained to this rock, who will fight and conquer empires in my place? Things have changed places now. We are all clay, General; and as for me, I shall soon be dust. The name of a conqueror, of an emperor, is now only the subject of a college exercise. Our exploits come under the ferula of a pedagogue, who praises or blames us at pleasure. What an abyss of difference between my miserable career and the eternal reign of Christ, still honoured with incense, loved, adored, living throughout the universe!" The Emperor ceased, and as General Berthand also kept silence—"If you do not understand," continued the Emperor, "that Jesus Christ is God—ah, well, I was wrong to make you a general!"—"Sentiments religieux de Napoléon I.," by the Chevalier de Beauterne. "Memorials."

[2] De Stark, "Entretiens philosophiques," p. 141.

grip of death, dying in the flower of His age, dying on the Cross, though He had only to utter one word to hear Himself proclaimed King. Far from being the great sage, "almost Divine," whom our adversaries are willing to revere, He would not have been even an honest man. If He, in appearance the humblest, had so deceived us, then would He have been in reality the proudest of men. Very far from deserving our admiration, He ought to have been the object of our eternal execration. Nothing would have remained for us except to espouse the cause of the Jews against Him, instead of sustaining His cause against them.

But the tone of sincerity which breathed forth from the lips of Jesus sufficiently proves the falseness of all such reasoning. Imposture could never co-exist with that mixture of Divine greatness and incomprehensible humility which was so easily discernible in Him. How can it be admitted that an impostor could preach so sublime a morality, a morality practised, too, by Himself with such perfection as has never been equalled? "Which of you can convince Me of sin?" He asked of His enemies. And not a voice ventured to make reply. Such a man as they describe would have been "a comedian," a charlatan in the sight of men, a blasphemer against God. The whole fabric of Christianity would rest upon an imposture—perfectly unique in the annals of history. Could God have permitted this? Could He have suffered so grave a fault to establish itself? Could He have given His sanction to so unheard-of a triumph? By doing this, He would have led astray the clearest intellects and the noblest hearts without interfering to save them! Yet He bestowed upon Christians the sublimest virtues and the grace of the most heroic devotedness the world has ever known! In thus acting, God would have put our deepest human convictions to a test altogether beyond their strength to overcome; and, we may add, He Himself would have been the deceiver and betrayer of His own world.

The theory of imposture is also false in the light of history. We know with what hostility the mission of Jesus was received by the influential classes of Israel. All its educated and learned men were leagued together

against Him; and, after three years, they finished by forcing His death-warrant on the weakness of Pilate. During the three years of His public life Jesus was closely watched by His enemies, and could not have deceived whole masses of the people. All His miracles were wrought in open day, some of the most remarkable at Jerusalem, and in the very midst of his adversaries; while several gave occasion to the most searching inquiries, as, for instance, in the case of the man born blind. Under such conditions imposture was impossible. Again, when at the moment of His judicial trial false testimony against Jesus was sought for on all sides, no one was found to accuse Him of trickery, or to cry out—"Behold such and such a sick man whom He pretended to cure, and has not cured." The position therefore claimed by Jesus of right belonged to Him; and in this case it is not enough that we admire Him—we must go beyond this and believe in Him, and our faith must deepen into adoration. From doubting with Thomas, from denying with Thomas, we must pass on to believing with Thomas, when, springing forward at one bound into a full act of faith, he cried out—"My Lord and my God!"

Pursuing our hypothesis, it is equally inadmissible to say that the Apostles were impostors. The question of sincerity and good faith cannot be discussed with regard to them at all, if we are well acquainted with the New Testament. In this matter of their good faith we may well begin our remarks with the two inseparable arguments of the old catechisms—the Apostles would not deceive us if they could, and they could not deceive us if they would. In fact, it is against these two simple propositions that contemporary infidelity has concentrated all the forces of its knowledge and ability, and scarcely any new feature has entered into the warfare, except the attempt to place the Apostles midway between falsehood and truth. They believed without believing; they told lies without lying. We, on the contrary, feel when reading what they have written that we are in the presence of ocular witnesses, of men thoroughly honest at heart. "That which was from the beginning," cries St. John, "which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which

we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the word of life. For the life was manifested, and we have seen, and do bear witness, and declare unto you the life eternal, which was with the Father, and hath appeared to us" (1 St. John i. 1, 2).

The good faith of the Apostles is so self-evident that Strauss contrived his mythical theory only because neither imposture nor any other natural explanation would apply to the New Testament. That which proves the sincerity of these men is the profound humility with which they speak of themselves. They avow their weaknesses, their faults, and even their crimes. St. Matthew insists upon drawing attention to his own occupation up to the very moment of his vocation, though it was so odious in the eyes of the Jews. St. Peter, who we know dictated the Gospel of St. Mark, dilates largely upon his triple denial, whilst he passes over in silence his glorious confession and the privileges accorded him by Jesus. All the Evangelists mention the reproaches of their Master for their want of courage, their little faith, their slowness of comprehension. Men who speak thus of themselves cannot well be telling untruths. And what interest could they have had in deceiving others? Death was in the balance, and who ever cared to die for a merely doubtful fact? The theory of roguery scarcely accords with their practice of virtue, for, dating from Pentecost, the life of the Apostles was sublime and heroic—they were gentle, humble, detached, chaste, and courageous. Neither does such a supposition accord with their independence of character — they fearlessly stigmatised the hypocrisy and iniquity of the Pharisees and the fury of the Jewish people.

Then as regards their writings—nothing equals their freedom and perfect naturalness of expression. They used their pens without art, without precaution, without any doubt of their subject, seemingly without a notion that any one else could ever doubt of it. It never occurred to them to furnish proofs of their assertions, or seek to charm the imagination, or even appeal to the sentiment of those whom they addressed. They described what they had seen, and they told it with perfect straightforwardness,

adding neither conjecture nor reflection. Nowhere do they stop to admire, or approve, or blame; never are they either astonished or indignant. They utter no word of surprise at sight of their Master's miracles, they shed no tear over His death. "There they crucified Him," is their statement. It would almost seem as if they were writing of some stranger. But we understand perfectly that they are recounting a history, and that they are, before everything else, *witnesses*. Such absence of bias—I had almost said indifference—is absolutely astonishing; for, having undertaken to write their book out of love for Jesus Christ, they speak of Him in the most tranquil, the most matter-of-fact tone possible. Yet these were the men who traversed the universe, braving torments and death for the glory of the name of Jesus Christ, and for the triumph of His doctrine. "There is nothing in all their writings," says Salvador, "even to their original and often sublime language, which does not stamp with a seal of authenticity and of the most convincing moral sincerity the books of the New Testament.[1] Between the Gospels and the apocryphal books there is, in fact, as wide a difference as between the tone of a perjurer and that of a true witness.

The sincerity of the Apostles was carried so far as actually to give details which might be interpreted to the disadvantage of Jesus. The relatives of our Lord said to Him—"Pass from hence, and go into Judea, that Thy disciples also may see the works which Thou dost. For there is no man that doth anything in secret and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If Thou do these things, manifest Thyself to the world." And St. John adds, to explain these words—"For neither did His brethren believe in Him" (St. John vii. 4, 5). Now, if the Apostles were untruthful, if they *invented* the personal existence of Jesus Christ, where did they find its type? This personality bears no analogy to anything in either pagan or Jewish antiquity. The Jewish rabbi is quite a different character. The Messias expected by the Jews had no resemblance to this creation. Yet Jesus, according to this view, was a model which had presented itself before their eyes. We feel that He must have

[1] "Jésus et sa doctrine," t. II., p. 192.

been a kind of vision to them, something truly marvellous. And the proof of this is that no details of ordinary life are found in the Gospel. Such details seem to disappear behind the moral splendour of Christ, as far as the Apostles were concerned. That which struck them in the Jesus whom they depict was, not so much His miraculous power, as His virtues—His goodness, humility, and sweetness—His love of God, of sinners, and of little children. Never before had they seen a moral ideal like to this one.

But it is inconceivable that the Apostles were such impostors as first to invent this beautiful moral Ideal, and then to declare that it had actually existed. They might as well have tried to represent a Divinity, an attempt which would have met with no better success. An idea like this is so original that the conception of it would never have entered their heads. Men of just as much intelligence had preceded their time, but never did one dream of calling some contemporary sage a God. They had not done this for Socrates, nor for Gautama Buddha, nor for Confucius. You may say that perhaps the Apostles were guilty of exaggeration, yet the chief characteristic of their witness is precisely its simplicity. Ardour no doubt characterises their words, but not dogmatism. These rude, uncultured peasants of Galilee could not have drawn the sentiments they express from any other source except that of a living ideal whom they saw before them. It is more extraordinary that Jesus Christ was for the Apostles not merely a Master whose teaching they proclaimed, He was a principle of action, and the very soul of their preaching. They preached—not a symbol, but a Person, and they lived by that fact. "This Jesus hath God raised again, whereof all we are witnesses" (Acts ii. 32). In a word, Christianity itself is founded upon this assertion.

An objection has been raised against the Evangelists that they were simple-minded men, incapable of reflecting on their own impressions, who mistook the chimeras of their imagination for realities. But this simplicity itself precludes the likelihood of such a mistake. They were quite incapable of themselves inventing what they narrated, or of concerting together to form a plan for deceiving the

world. The facts to which they bore testimony were external and public. Superior education is not needed to constitute a man a trustworthy witness as to such matters. In some respects they were, as witnesses, superior to others. They were men of the people, among whom the common belief is the most deeply rooted, and who are easily influenced by their natural timidity, as well as overawed by superiority of talent or of fortune. They were less likely than some to be easily persuaded of the truth of a new religion quite at variance with current ideas, with traditional hopes, and with national aspirations. In this we find an argument for especial truthfulness in all that they wrote. They were men governed by circumstances. The teaching of their Master often surprised them; always went beyond them. The extraordinary events narrated by them were evidently unexpected. They recorded these events in silent astonishment, and without comment. Manifestly they were not so much actors as instruments. This proof, drawn from the intellectual tendencies of the Apostles, is one of the strongest that can be urged in favour of Christianity, though its force can only be grasped by those who have attentively studied the New Testament. We cannot possibly believe that men like these were forgers. We should have to do incredible violence to ourselves to admit such an hypothesis; and, had we done this, we should never again feel contented in our minds. Such a result proves plainly that the moral condition of the Apostles cannot be explained by ordinary means.

Finally, we cannot suppose that twelve peasants—poor, uncultured men—could have been under an hallucination, that they remained in this state for three whole years, or that during that time they constantly mistook the pretensions of their Master for realities, and the tricks of a charlatan for plain, honest facts. Hallucination pre-supposes a sensitive, dreamy nature. Common labouring men are not subject to it, and we never meet with it in country life. A malady of that character finds its home in a feeble nervous system, and may be traced to heredity and to habits of life.

III.

Could there be any truth in the theory that the miraculous cures recorded in the Gospels are simply the result of hypnotism or suggestion, and that Jesus had the power of working cures by means of the natural influence of a superior mind and a powerful will, acting upon the nervous temperament of the sick? A suggestion like this merits nothing but contempt. No student of the Gospels, were he a believer or an infidel, would think for a moment of discussing it. Supposing, however, that Jesus was a clever mesmerist, why did He not avow this? Why should He have passed off His performances for divine works? Why not have used His power to reduce His enemies to impotence? Why should He, with all His kindness and compassionateness of heart, have carried into the grave a secret which would have conferred a benefit on the whole human race? Besides, before a cure can be effected by means of hypnotism, the presence of several very precise conditions, well understood in these days, is absolutely necessary. The subject must be a person of great susceptibility; he ought to know the operator beforehand; he requires to be subjected to the influence of a number of successive movements. We hear nothing of all this in our Lord's manner of action. A sick man is brought to Him, often from a distance. A complete cure is wrought on him by a single word, or a single sign. Jesus performs no intermediate act; He merely says—"I will; be thou healed." Or perhaps He employs some means which has nothing to do with the cure itself, but is designed merely to test the faith of the invalid. Thus, after having put clay on the eyes of the man born blind, He says to him—"Go, wash in the pool of Siloe." "Thy faith hath saved thee," He says, both to the centurion and to the woman of Canaan. Cures by "suggestion" rarely avail for any save nervous diseases, whereas the power of Jesus extended to every species of human suffering. Besides, how are we to explain the cures of those born blind, of the lame, of deaf mutes, all instantaneously effected by the Divine command? What shall we say of the resuscitation of the dead, so often recorded in the Gospel? Above all, what is to be thought

of the miracles worked upon the physical world, such as the changing of water into wine at Cana, or the multiplication of the loaves, or the calming of the tempest at the voice of Christ? Even were we to admit that the benevolent and strong will-power of Jesus could cause a man long chained to his couch to spring up suddenly from it, like a stag from its covert, how are we to explain His miraculous operations over inanimate nature? Yet these are everywhere attested in the same manner as the personal cures. The Evangelists record them as accompanied by the same characteristic words of Jesus which stamped with the seal of unimpeachable reality His miraculous healing of the body. Not one of these facts, however, bears the most distant relation to either hypnotism or suggestion.

IV.

For the explanation of the origin of the Christian documents and of the Christian Church there remains the ingenious theory of "Tendencies," cleverly invented by Baur and his disciples. These tendencies began, according to them, to manifest themselves in the first century. They were divided into the Petrinism of one side, and the Paulinism of the other. Petrinism marked the Jewish Christianity; Paulinism, the universal Christianity, including the Gentiles within its pale. The former constituted the party of legal observance; the other aimed at delivering Christianity from the least bond to Judaism. The Gospels were the result of the contest between the Judæo-Christian party and the Paulinist side. They were preceded by a literature, since become apocryphal, which formerly represented the violent oppositions of the first century. The school of Baur formulated this criterion: "Any document of the New Testament wherein is found no trace of division among the Apostles certainly belongs to the second century and not to the apostolic times."[1]

We should never be able to persuade anybody in these days that the Hebrew Gospel preceded that of St. Matthew,

[1] "Histoire de l'Église des trois premiers siècles."

or that the Gospel of St. Matthew is nearer to us than the Gospel of St. Luke. This attempt to transport the first century of the Church into the second will remain as a souvenir of the prodigious temerity of these sceptics. The idea of any radical opposition between the Christianity of the Upper Chamber and that of St. Paul has been exploded by the mere onward march of serious scientific research. There certainly was once a dispute between Peter and Paul. The subject involved in this contention Jesus indicated when He said—"No man puts new wine into old bottles." But the Apostles and Evangelists all taught identically the same doctrine. It is an established fact that in the middle of the second century all the Christian Churches, forming part of the one great Catholic Church, held and professed one and the same faith. There does not exist a single monument of this epoch, or of the epoch immediately following it, which fails to attest this fact. The stability and uniformity of the faith was one of the glories claimed by the apologists for the new society, as opposed to the hesitations and contradictions of philosophers amongst one another, and even with themselves individually. Tertullian maintains with energy, in the words which follow, the unity of faith in the several Churches despite their diversity in certain practices—"We and they have all one Faith, one God, one same Christ, one common hope, one Sacrament of Baptism; and, in a word, we are one and the same Church."[1]

These two unchanging facts, unity of faith and diversity of practice, are entirely inexplicable if the Apostles did not, without a single exception, teach the same doctrine. Unity of teaching among the Apostles comes out principally in the book of the Acts, a fact so apparent that it formed the reason why Baur rejected the authenticity of this book, and transferred its origin to the middle of the second century. But even conceding this point to M. Baur, we could still draw from it a powerful argument in favour of the perfect doctrinal agreement of the Apostles. For, had this book, even from the second century, been regarded as divinely inspired, it must have been so regarded exactly because its account accorded with

[1] "De virgin. vel.," ii.

the idea received at this epoch respecting the relations of the Apostles among themselves. We cannot believe that the Churches of Asia, which were so tenacious of their particular traditions, even had there been any real dissension between St. John and St. Paul, or between St. Paul and St. Peter, would have renounced their tradition on the point in order to lend themselves to a piece of Roman policy. He who could maintain such a proposition would show he had no knowledge of the Christians of those times.

As regards St. Paul in particular, he repeatedly passes beautiful eulogiums upon his fellow-Apostles. They are "his brethren" his "glory in Christ" (2 Cor. i. 14). He identifies himself with them; their cause is his, in opposition to the teaching of false apostles (*Ibid.*, xi. 13). If he says he has "laboured more abundantly than the others," he is far from preferring himself to them—"For whether I, or they, so we preach, and so you have believed" (1 Cor. xv. 11). Again, when writing to Churches which he has not himself founded, he does not give himself out as one having anything to teach them different from what they have already received. The precept he most frequently insists upon is that they should persevere in the ancient faith. "Now, I beseech you, brethren, to mark them who make dissensions and offences contrary to the doctrines which you have learned, and avoid them" (Rom. xvi. 17). As for the relations between Peter and Paul, our long-established belief in the authenticity of the First Epistle of St. Peter makes it impossible to credit the idea of any important disagreement between the two Apostles. It is true that those critics who place the writing of the Acts in the second century have not failed to date this Epistle also from the same, pretending that it was drawn up with a like view of posthumous conciliation. Everything must bend, so it seems, to the necessities of their thesis. We need only remark that the posthumous author is made to take a great deal of trouble to reconcile after their death two men who, in life, certainly walked together as friends for long years. As to the fact of the dispute, if the historian "softened down" a few features of it, can it be proved that he changed the story in any degree? Did

he dissimulate the Judaical character of the faith and worship of the Christians of Jerusalem? Are not the first discourses of St. Peter impregnated with the breath of Judaism? And when, little by little, the first intimations of the universalist mission of St. Paul penetrate the atmosphere, what mark is there of either the improbable or the unreal in the scene of that great change?

Nay, in the very heat of his polemical stand against the surviving spirit of the synagogue, Paul extends "the hand of fellowship" to the twelve, in order to share with them the labours of the mission field. He carries to Jerusalem, on several occasions, the alms of the converted Gentiles, attesting thereby that he recognises but one Christian Church, the Church of Christ. Finally, St. Paul maintains with great energy the independence of his apostolate in its distinctive specialities; he speaks of having spent in Jerusalem, besides his first stay there, fifteen days under the same roof with Peter, at which time he also saw "James, the brother of the Lord." [1]

V.

The theory of M. Rénan is scarcely anything else than a mixture of all the preceding systems.[2] The miracles of the Gospels are, of course, his great difficulty. But it is not easy to set aside these miracles of Jesus Christ. To uproot them from the life of Christ is to uproot the very soil in which they originated. No fact of ancient history is so well attested as these are, and that by four accounts equally contemporary, concordant, and original. If facts thus attested can be false, there is then, we do not say no history of Jesus, but no such thing as history at all. No one will deny this who takes the trouble to follow the marches and counter-marches of M. Rénan in his chapter of the "Vie de Jésus"—*Sur les miracles évangéliques.* To tell the truth, he does not know his own mind. "The Jews," he writes, "easily believed in the marvellous. And

[1] See "Histoire des premiers siècles de l'Église chrétienne," by E. de Pressensé.

[2] "Reflection leads only to doubt," said M. Rénan ("Vie de Jésus," 1st edition, p. 319). How, then, can he be certain that "Jesus is not God"?

this is the reason why, looking at the supreme grandeur of the character of Christ, they falsely attributed miracles to Him." In his attempt to give every possible explanation, he ends by giving none at all! At one time he requires us to believe that "sincerity admits of different degrees"; at another he maintains that "Jesus had no idea of natural order regulated by laws"; and, moreover, "one of His most deeply rooted opinions was that with faith and prayer man had unlimited power over nature."[1] But in this case why should Jesus be a thaumaturgus "reluctantly and against His will"? Why is it "permissible to believe that the reputation of a miracle-worker was thrust upon Him; that He did not exactly resist it, but did nothing to encourage it; and that, in any case, He experienced the vanity produced by such an opinion regarding Himself"?[2] As a child plays with dominoes, grouping them into fancy patterns, so Rénan shuffled his cards, arranging them according to preconceived ideas.

"Folly, illusion, or trickery," are the explanations which M. Rénan feels obliged to apply to the miracles of Jesus. To explain away the mystery of the Ascension he observes —"The atmosphere of these heights has a strange power of refraction. The divine Phantom cast its reflection on the air, and all present fell upon their faces."[3] The miracle of Pentecost M. Rénan dares to describe as "a current of air rushing through the upper chamber, and resembling the breath of Jesus, which was to change the face of the world."[4] Belief in the Resurrection was, in the first instance, the effect of hallucination on the part of Mary Magdalene; and, "intoxicated with love and joy, she thought she had seen the adored Master; and so, to gain credit for her dream, she did not hesitate to make use of a pious fraud."[5] In connection with this act of deceit attributed to Mary, Rénan explains that there are "many degrees in sincerity. There is the sincerity of the Oriental, and the sincerity of the Western nations." Frankly, we own that we prefer the cynicism of Voltaire.

[1] "Vie de Jésus," p. 267.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 276.
[3] "Les apôtres," p. 26.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 26.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 43.

According to M. Rénan, the phrase "instinctive and spontaneous creations of the primitive ages," casts a dazzling light upon the genesis of a people, on their mutual intercourse, language, myths, and gods. M. Rénan is easily satisfied. For ourselves, we confess we see in these "instinctive and spontaneous creations," these "imaginative instincts of humanity," only a new theory for the beginnings of Christianity, one absolutely incapable of verification, and this for weighty reasons. Such a theory is best refuted by showing that it has been invented simply to meet the needs of the case. M. Rénan has produced it from his imagination because the explanations given in the eighteenth century (which are at least comprehensible) were, in his eyes, "odious or insufficient," and because he knew well that the appearance of Christianity is most certainly not to be dated from the "primitive" ages! Besides, Baur himself has proved that the idea of a myth is positively irreconcilable with the facts recorded in the Gospels. To sum up in a word, a serious critic, Christian or not, who has profoundly studied the Gospels, will undoubtedly conclude that the most reasonable hypothesis for explaining their facts (if we are to exclude the supernatural) is that of imposture. Voltaire was decidedly in the right on this point, and he was certainly not inferior to M. Rénan in intelligence.

The Jesus of Rénan is a moral monstrosity. M. Rénan, indeed, crowns Him with virtues, and claims for Him a glory which is perfectly unique. He places our Lord on holy ground, on "the highest summit of human grandeur." He had a perfect comprehension of God; He "revealed a heaven filled with pure souls." He created an "eternal, an absolute religion." All ages will proclaim that "He is the greatest of the children of men." Alarmed at this, M. Havet felt obliged to warn his friend that the parish priests might very fairly some day quote him in their sermons. If so, they would require to be very simple-minded, for if the head of Rénan's statue is of gold its feet are of filth.

We are not astonished at such contradictions on the part of the author of the "Vie de Jésus." Whatever theory be adopted to explain the life of Christ, other than the supernatural, including belief in His Divinity, such theory

must be forced and strained. It is impossible to understand anything in the life of Jesus if the reality of the miracles attributed to Him by the Evangelists is not admitted. Hence the work of M. Rénan has not done to Christianity, which he pretended to have destroyed, all the harm that its author expected. When the "Vie de Jésus" first appeared, Doudan wrote in his Letters—"This book has not a healthy tone. It is elegant, but feeble." M. Cognat, a college friend of Rénan, wrote—"I have the conviction, based upon facts, that no serious man, thoroughly instructed in the Christian religion, and safe against those prejudices and interests which rob the mind of its clear-sightedness and deprive the will of its energy and independence, will find anything but a confirmation of his faith in the critical and historical productions of M. Rénan."[1]

"I have met with several sincere sceptics," writes M. Caro in his "Idée de Dieu," "who, struck by the more than extravagant contrasts of Rénan, in his 'Vie de Jésus,' gave up reading the book before reaching the end. They experienced an inward repugnance to his gratuitous fallacies, and to the assertions which he does not even take the trouble to discuss. Their minds strongly rebelled against explanations which are more incomprehensible and more mysterious than the mystery they sought to dispel. They asked themselves, 'Whence comes this utter disregard for all the canons of criticism, as soon as the attempt is made to apply to the life of Jesus those rules of induction, which have revealed to the student the secret of the life of Mahomet? Why does this book, containing the results of the most audacious exegesis possible, leave its readers so sad, so dissatisfied, and so anxious for a fresh inquiry, as though nothing had yet been done in that direction?' They even ask themselves whether the element in the life of Jesus, which so obstinately resists the assaults of critical discussion, and is proof against the most subtle and most powerful solvents known to the chemistry of science, is not precisely the very element which is sought to be eliminated, and which defies every effort of human analysis, viz., the element of Divinity!"[2]

[1] "M. Rénan hier et aujourd'hui," in finem.
[2] P. 100.

"The direct and sovereign proof of Christianity," wrote M. de Cossoles, in his "Certitude philosophique," "is the absolute powerlessness of its adversaries to explain it otherwise than as it explains itself—that is to say, by the truth of its own history." Now, who has illustrated this powerlessness better than M. Rénan himself? Where does it appear more evident than in his "Vie de Jésus"? for no clearer demonstration of the truth of the miracle could be given than is contained in his own account of the raising of Lazarus, and no more conclusive confirmation of the Gospel narrative. His book might have been made a truly learned and ingenious Apology for Christianity, had its author only changed the intention with which he wrote. But, as it is, how much greater force and authority does it gain from its being so involuntary a testimony, a testimony wrenched, as it were, from him by the invincible evidence of fact? A true Balaam among the critics, M. Rénan has thus proved, by irrefragable evidence, all that he sought to destroy. The extent, the depth, the variety of his scholarly researches have served only to bring into stronger light the utter impotence of science to build up any formidable opposition to the Gospel. The knowledge of Semitic languages and of Talmudic literature, of the German exegesis and of comparative philosophy, and the attentive study of the Holy Places by means of travel—all these resources have been unable to furnish him with better arms for fighting the apostolic account than the suggestion that "Lazarus, still pale from recent sickness, who had probably himself ordered his head to be bandaged, caused himself to be laid in his family tomb"—an explanation which has covered our modern historian with lasting ridicule. How mortifying a disaster for criticism! How legitimate a triumph for the truth! Showing that now, as of old, "the Lord hath made His enemies His footstool."

On this matter M. de Portmartin writes—"Many persons, otherwise little devout, ask themselves whether it is, from a spiritual point of view, safer to take M. Rénan seriously, than to interpret Holy Scripture literally."[1] "This is the apocryphal gospel of the nineteenth century, as far distant in reality from true history as the Gospel of St. Thomas, or

[1] "Nouveaux Samedis," May, 1886, p. 291.

the Acta Pilati."[1] "If M. Rénan," says his old master, M. Le Hir, "had copied the pages of the sacred text, and written these two lines below them: The apparitions here related are only natural phenomena, the miracles are so many myths, and what remains, which does not amount to much, fluctuates between legend and history, he would have given us the summary of his whole three hundred pages. We might have lost a few phrases, but that is about all."[2] And a little further he says—"The Jesus of this new Gospel is made up of parts so discordant that they cannot co-exist. Far from such a man being able to reform the human race, He could never have thrown down a single idol at Athens, much less at Rome. You, Rénan, place the secret of His strength, not in the superiority of His intellect, for that He does not possess, but in sentiment, in the indefinable charm of His look, His tone, His gesture, or His person. Such a man would certainly either have to change the world in His own lifetime, or else to abandon the attempt. For how can you make out that He could communicate to His disciples an influence so eminently personal and intransferable?"[3] "As to believers," writes M. Challemel-Lacour, "it would grieve them to see, in this book, the figure of their Master, instead of growing in grandeur under the touch of an artist, growing gradually less and less great through the abuse of epithets, until He becomes in the end only an incomprehensible mixture of weakness and duplicity, of meekness and of anger, which slowly freezes up all power of adoration."[4]

Respecting the other works of M. Rénan on the Christian Origins, we should allow M. G. Boissier, another sceptic, to speak his mind—"From the moment that the progress of Christianity, during the first two centuries, ceases to be regarded as a divine fact, it becomes an extremely obscure event. If we do not blindly accept, without the smallest alteration, the narratives of the Sacred Books, and of the Fathers of the Church, we find ourselves forced to replace them by pure hypotheses."

M. Rénan, having felt bound to declare that the learned

[1] M. de Pressensé, "Jésus Christ," introduction, p. 12.
[2] "Études bibliques," vol. ii., p. 288.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 469.
[4] "Discours de réception à l' Académie française."

men of his school are disagreed upon the most important events in the history of early Christianity; that he himself has been obliged to change his ideas; that the opinion which he has last advanced is far from being as certain as he would wish; that he is often tempted to say, with Quintus Curtius, *Equidem plura transcribo quam credo*—a Christian apologist can very easily find cause for triumph in these various uncertainties of the enemy.[1]

The recoil resulting from the blow struck by M. Rénan upon the rock of the Church has not been so disastrous as the adversaries of Christianity dreamed that it would be. St. John Chrysostom did not formulate a paradox when he wrote that "the adversaries of truth help to disseminate its doctrines."[2] St. Bernard expresses the same thought—"They who seek to injure the Church," he says "only serve her in spite of themselves."[3] And Pascal says—"Of a truth, it is a glorious thing for religion to number such unreasonable men among her enemies. Their opposition is so little dangerous to her that it serves, on the contrary, to establish her principal truths all the more firmly."[4]

VI.

Let us, however, free ourselves from all these thorny questions, and consider that the best means of refuting mythism, naturalism, suggestionism, is to take the chief miraculous facts of the Gospels, and to show that mythism and naturalism cannot account for them in any reasonable manner. On this point, as on so many others, that which Pascal calls "the impertinence of error" is something very wonderful. We have to read only a few pages of the Gospel to be convinced that there is no tone of mythism there, and that the miracles recounted are actual facts. These narratives are too instructive, impressive, and circumstantial to breathe anything but sincerity, and are worthy of our entire confidence. The reader feels that they are written by witnesses admitted to intimate familiarity

[1] *Revue des Deux Mondes*, "Les origines du Christianisme," de M. Renan, 1st March, 1882, p. 73.
[2] *Hom., 5 in Gen., no. 4.*
[3] *Serm. 30, in Cant., no. 1.*
[4] "Pensées," édit. Havet, p. 138.

with their Master, and that the portrait traced out in the discourses and miracles of Jesus is that of no mere man, however great or holy; the majesty of God veiled beneath the infirmity of human nature betrays itself everywhere.

We propose to consider the few miracles which follow:—

1, The cure of the man born blind; 2, the raising of Lazarus; 3, the multiplication of the loaves; 4, the stilling of the tempest; 5, the miraculous draught of fishes; and 6, the miracle wrought at the Beautiful Gate. In the presence of such as these unbelief stands condemned.

M. Wallon has remarked that Rénan, who felt obliged to speak of the resurrection of Lazarus, prudently passed over in silence the cure of the man born blind. It is not indeed easy, in the case of this miracle, to pretend that it was the effect of hallucination, or a piece of clever trickery. This particular cure was the subject of an exceedingly detailed inquiry, conducted by persons of a very malevolent disposition, as the narrative itself makes only too evident.

"And Jesus, passing by, saw a man who was blind from his birth. And His disciples asked Him, Rabbi, who hath sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. . . . When He had said these things, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and spread the clay upon his eyes, and said to him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloe. . . . He went, therefore, and washed, and he came seeing." . . . This has nothing of the character of a legend, of which the details are usually exaggerated and complicated. On the contrary, the cure of the man is described in a most natural manner. Imagine the same fact told in a legendary record—the Koran, for example. There the progress of the wonderful event would have been dwelt upon; the man's going would have been narrated with dramatic effect; the scales would have been represented as falling from his eyes; he would have felt a tremor pass through him; and the light of day would have burst upon his vision, etc. Again, equally natural do we find the sequel of the story in the Gospel narrative—"The

neighbours, therefore, and they who had seen him before that he was a beggar, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? Some said, This is he! But others said, No, but he is like him. But he said, I am he." It is some one who resembles him, said the people, so little idea had they that such a miracle could have taken place. Details so precise might co-exist with imposture, but never with legend. The narrative continues—"They said, therefore, to him, How were thy eyes opened? He answered, That man that is called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes, and said to me, Go to the pool of Siloe and wash. And I went, I washed, and I see." We have before us a contented man, who does not use too many words. "That man who is called Jesus," he replies, for he does not at the moment believe Him to be a prophet, "told me to go and wash in the fountain. I went, I washed, and I see." . . . How perfectly natural all this! Then we read—"And they said to him, Where is He? He answered, I know not. After this they bring him . . . to the Pharisees," and a strict inquiry begins before the doctors of the nation, for with the Jews the Pharisees were everything. What follows plainly shows their dispositions—"Now, it was the Sabbath when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. Again, therefore, the Pharisees asked him how he had received his sight. But he said to them, He put clay upon my eyes, and I washed, and I see." What he has already said he now repeats, for there was no deception in the case. The Pharisees then attempt to prove to him that his cure has not come from God. "Some, therefore, of the Pharisees said, This man is not of God, who keepeth not the Sabbath."

All this is mere cavil. To argue against a known fact is absurd. Whether the miracle was the work of the devil or of God, it was a positive fact, and must be discussed as such. But the Pharisees were remarkable for chicanery. "Others" (of the Pharisees) "said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?" They were puzzled. Their conscience, more or less strict, told them that Jesus had done wrong in working cures on the Sabbath; but this was bad reasoning, since to cure is not servile work. "And there was a division among them," adds the

Evangelist. Here is another typical detail. The narrator, after giving ample proof of the division which reigned among the Pharisees, now openly declares that they were divided. This is an instance of ingenuous simplicity which would certainly have been avoided by a modern writer. "They say, therefore, again to the blind man, What sayest thou of Him that hath opened thy eyes? And he said, He is a prophet." They question him no further about his cure, intending to return to it later, for they were too angry to speak about it; but they ask him about Jesus, and he answers to the effect that this Jesus who has cured him cannot be an ordinary man, but no doubt is some prophet. "The Jews then did not believe concerning him that he had been blind, and had received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight." The people present at this scene believed in the Pharisees, and, seeing that these Pharisees contested the fact, would not yield to evidence until the parents of the young man were summoned. "And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How, then, doth he now see?" The inquiry which they continue to make upon the affair shows that, in spite of all their sophisms, they are not yet fully convinced. "His parents answered them, and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but how he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not; ask himself, he is of age, let him speak for himself." The parents knew well enough the details of the cure of their son, who would certainly have told them all about it; but they dared not speak of it, knowing what a risk they would run if they affirmed that Jesus had wrought this miracle. They were aware of the hatred of the Pharisees against Jesus. The following verse bears witness thereto—"These things his parents said, because they feared the Jews." Continuing their inquiries, the Pharisees now brought the cured man before his parents. "They therefore called the man again, . . . and said to him, Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner." They make no reference here to the fact of the miracle. The testimony of the young man, as well as of his parents, is conclusive on the matter. They return to their theories

and say, in a solemn tone—"We Pharisees, we who are men of understanding, know that this man is a sinner." The man before them makes them, however, feel decidedly uncomfortable; though they are worthy to form part of the commission of inquiry demanded by M. Rénan. This time he upon whom the miracle had been performed answers in a remarkably practical manner—"If He be a sinner, I know not. One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." The answer is one of perfect common sense. "They said, then, to him, What did He to thee? How did He open thy eyes?" They are now growing angry and excited. They would fain discover some flaw, some contradiction, in the story, that they might convict the poor reasoner on the spot. But he makes the same answer a third time, pointing it with cruel irony—"I have told you already, and you have heard: why would you hear it again? Will you also become His disciples?" There was no lack of mind in him. "They reviled him therefore, and said, Be thou His disciple; but we are the disciples of Moses. We know that God spoke to Moses; but as to this man, we know not from whence He is. The man answered, and said to them: Why, herein is a wonderful thing, that you know not from whence He is, and He hath opened my eyes. Now, we know that God doth not hear sinners; but if a man be a server of God, and doth His will, him He heareth." Certainly, after Jesus had opened his eyes, the man saw with wonderful clearness. He, who had never studied theology, as the Pharisees had, gave them an admirable lesson. In his good sense he comprehended that the Person he spoke of could be no ordinary man. His reasoning is founded on fact, therefore his argument is all the stronger. He advances one more point—"From the beginning of the world it hath not been heard that any man hath opened the eyes of one born blind. Unless this man were of God, He could not do anything." We have here his theological conclusion. "Thou wast wholly born in sins," cried the Pharisees, "and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out. Jesus heard that they had cast him out: and when He had found him, He said to him: Dost thou believe in the Son of God?" . . . The man who does

not know that Jesus is the Son of God, but who has great confidence in Him since his miraculous cure, doubts not that there does exist a Son of God. Only he does not know Him. "He answered and said, Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him? And Jesus said to him: Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee." This affirmation is a solemn one. Nevertheless, the man hesitates not. "And he said, Lord, I believe. And falling down he adored Him." And Jesus adds—"For judgment I am come into this world; that they who see not, may see; and they who see, may become blind."

Such is the moral conclusion of this most effective scene. Of those who are well-disposed, Jesus says—"My word is sufficient for them; they shall be enlightened." But of those who are ill-disposed, who imagine that they know all things, He declares that even the greatest prodigies do but darken the understanding.

The narrative terminates thus—"And some of the Pharisees who were with Him, heard; and they said unto Him, Are we also blind? Jesus said to them, If you were blind, you should not have sin; but now you say, We see. Your sin remaineth" (St. John ix.).

Such precision in detail as this, such protracted examination on the part of evil designing men, such ingenuousness and good sense in the answers given to them, so striking a moral conclusion drawn—all these are discordant with the character of any legend. This ninth chapter of St. John therefore stands alone. It gives out the genuine ring of truth.

That which makes the miracle of the Raising of Lazarus difficult to deny is that it explains so clearly the closing scene in the life of Jesus.

The other Evangelists do not enable us to grasp so distinctly the reason why the Pharisees were thus bitterly enraged against Jesus. But in St. John's Gospel we see clearly that, after this miracle had been performed, they felt the necessity of striking a final blow. The whole world was going after Jesus, and their own reign would soon be over. "The chief priests therefore and the Pharisees, gathered a council, and said, What do we?

for this man doeth many miracles. If we let Him alone so, all will believe in Him; and the Romans will come and take away our place and nation" (St. John xi. 47, 48).

We shall follow the Gospel narrative, on which the mark of authenticity is so deeply impressed as to convince any unprejudiced reader:—

"Now, there was a certain man sick, named Lazarus, of Bethania, of the town of Mary and of Martha her sister. And Mary was she that anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped His feet with her hair: whose brother Lazarus was sick. His sisters therefore sent to Him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick." This trait bears on it the seal of truth. Its expression of affection is so simple that it is difficult to imagine it to be a legendary fabrication.

"And Jesus hearing it, said to them, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified by it.

"Now, Jesus loved Martha, and her sister Mary, and Lazarus. When He had heard therefore that he was sick, He still remained in the same place two days." It was the intention of Jesus to work an extraordinary, an incontestable, miracle. He waited until Lazarus should be really dead, in order to put forth the wonders of His almighty power, and to confirm once for all the faith of His disciples.

"Then, after that, He said to His disciples, Let us go into Judea again. The disciples say to Him, Rabbi, the Jews but now sought to stone Thee; and goest Thou thither again? Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours of the day? If a man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if he walk in the night, he stumbleth, because the light is not in him. . . . And after that He said to them, Lazarus our friend sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep." Jesus wishes them to understand that He goes to raise him from the dead. But the disciples, ignorant of the death of Lazarus, take the words in their literal sense, and respond naturally, "Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well." Jesus, however, spoke of his death; and they thought that He spoke of the

repose of sleep. "Then, therefore, Jesus said to them plainly, Lazarus is dead. And I am glad, for your sakes, that I was not there, that you may believe." He knew well that their faith stood in need of further confirmation; that they wished for additional miracles to help them to believe. "Thomas, therefore, who is called Didymus," and who was an enthusiast, "said to his fellow-disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him! Jesus therefore came, and found that he had been four days already in the grave. Now Bethania was near Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off. And many of the Jews were come to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother." This last detail scarcely accords with any explanation of the resurrection of Lazarus that suggests a preconcerted plan, a scene arranged between Jesus Christ, Lazarus, and his sisters. M. Rénan's explanation is not a happy one, seeing that Jesus raised Lazarus to life in the presence of the assembled Jews. Moreover, such an idea is not borne out by the language of the sisters of Lazarus as recorded, nor does it favour the supposition that the brother and sisters may have had in view the glorification of their Master. "Martha therefore," we are told, "as soon as she heard that Jesus was come, went to meet Him; but Mary sat at home"—a statement which is in perfect harmony with the character given to Martha in the Gospels, that she habitually undertook the exterior duties of the house, while Mary played the hostess, receiving strangers and entertaining them, as appears from her conversation with Jesus.

"Martha therefore said to Jesus, Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." As if she would say, "You were told of his sickness, why did you not come?"—words which evidently meant some reproach; yet at the same moment she shows her confidence in Jesus. Although her brother indeed is dead, she knows that Jesus can still do something for him. "But now also I know that whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee. Jesus saith to her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith to Him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." She is not willing to rest content with his future resurrection.

"Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in Me, although he be dead, shall live: And every one that liveth, and believeth in Me, shall not die for ever. Believest thou this? She saith to Him, Yea, Lord, I have believed that Thou art Christ the Son of the living God, who art come into this world." Feeling that Jesus is demanding her faith, as a necessary condition for the miracle, she meets the demand with her whole soul. "And when she had said these things, she went and called her sister Mary secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee. She, as soon as she heard this, riseth quickly, and cometh to Him. For Jesus was not yet come into the town; but He was still in that place where Martha had met Him. The Jews therefore who were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary that she rose up speedily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth to the grave to weep there." There is no hint of pre-arrangement in all this. No one wishing to compose an attractive story would ever have imagined details like these. "When Mary therefore was come where Jesus was, seeing Him, she fell down at His feet, and saith to Him, Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." She speaks absolutely like Martha. A forger of the story would certainly have avoided putting the same cry into the mouths of the two women. You loved us so much! You have cured so many others! Oh, why did you leave Lazarus to die? "Jesus therefore, when He saw her weeping, and the Jews that were come with her weeping, groaned in the spirit, and troubled Himself." Jesus is quite overcome at the sight of all the bystanders in tears; and the Evangelist, who records what he has seen, has no hesitation in stating it. Nor was this any act of weakness in Jesus. We have the fullest sympathy with Him here; we know how we are affected when we see those whom we love weeping, even those who are strangers to us. To feel otherwise would betray hard-heartedness and want of common humanity. "And He said, Where have you laid him?" They are overjoyed, and "they say to Him, Lord, come and see." How eager and impulsive is their request. "And Jesus wept. The Jews therefore said, Behold how He loved him!"—a remark which so moved the Evangelist that he

recorded it, though not essential to his story. "But some of them said, Could not He that opened the eyes of the man born blind have caused that this man should not die?"

Their minds were really perplexed. Knowing that Lazarus was the friend of Jesus, and seeing Jesus was weeping, they said among themselves—"He ought to have cured him before he died." "Jesus therefore again groaning in Himself, cometh to the sepulchre. . . . He said, Take away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith to Him, Lord, by this time he stinketh, for he is now dead four days." Truly there is no acting here. Martha doubts now whether Jesus can call back to life a man who died four days previously. "He is a corpse," she seems to say. "The body is corrupt and fetid. It is too late." Is not all this sufficiently genuine for any caviller? Just now she was all eagerness to reach the spot; but when the moment arrives, at sight of this putrefying corpse, she has her doubts. Jesus, alluding to what He had said to her before, addresses Martha with this severe reprimand—"Did I not say to thee, that if thou wouldst believe, thou shalt see the glory of God? They took, therefore, the stone away, and Jesus, lifting up His eyes, said, Father, I give Thee thanks that Thou hast heard Me. And I know that Thou hearest Me always: but because of the people who stand about have I said it, that they may believe that Thou has sent Me. When He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth! And presently he that had been dead came forth, bound feet and hands with winding bands, and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus said to them, Loose him, and let him go." None but God could command death in such terms. The narration is either true or false: if false, it is a pure invention of the Evangelist. Yet who would dare to assert this after reading the account? And now the result proves clearly enough that there was no mystification here. "Many, therefore, of the Jews, who were come to Mary and Martha, and had seen the things that Jesus did, believed in Him." *Many*, yet not *all*. "But some of them went to the Pharisees, and told them the things that Jesus had done. The chief priests therefore and the Pharisees

gathered a council, and said, What do we, for this man doth many miracles?" Such language affords ample evidence that they believed in the fact, but were not willing to admit the teaching which Jesus engrafted on all His miracles. "If we let Him alone so, all will believe in Him, and the Romans will come, and take away our place and nation. But one of them named Caiphas, being the high priest that year, said to them, You know nothing. Neither do you consider that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not" (St. John xi.).

The account of the multiplication of the loaves is equally incapable of being explained by the theories of either illusion or imposture. Its narration in St. John's Gospel[1] indicates a miracle of a very marked kind, which, if a fact at all, was clearly supernatural; no illusion being possible. It differed widely in character from our Lord's act in walking on the waters. All who partook of the loaves were filled, and there remained still twelve basketsful of bread. M. Rénan tries to evade the difficulty by describing it as a "miracle of frugality" in the desert! He, no doubt, meant this for pleasantry. If the people were merely "frugal" in the quantity they took, the delirious enthusiasm which brought them to the point of proclaiming Jesus King of Judea was simply incomprehensible. The facts attending the miracle are as follows:—"After these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is that of Tiberias." The second name is added as being well known to the Romans. "And a great multitude followed Him." The three other Evangelists make the same remark, though in terms so much stronger that it quite accounts for the astonishment of the Jews when in presence of Jesus, "because they saw the miracles that He did on them that were diseased."

"Jesus . . . went up into a mountain, and there He sat with His disciples. Now, the Pasch, the festival day of the Jews, was near at hand." Here is a very precise detail:—"When Jesus therefore had lifted up His eyes, and seen that a very great multitude cometh to Him, He said

[1] St. John vi.

to Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? And this He said to try him, for He Himself knew what He would do." This reflection of the Evangelist enables us to foresee that Jesus has the intention of working a miracle. "Philip answered Him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one may take a little"—words which decisively exclude the miracle of frugality. "One of His disciples, Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, saith to Him, There is a boy here that hath five barley loaves and two fishes; but what are they among so many?" This observation was a very natural one. Jesus addresses Philip; and Andrew, who is simple and outspoken, says, "There is a boy here with five loaves and two fishes." He is aware of the difficulty, and acknowledges how poorly it can be met—"What are they among so many?" "Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now, there was much grass in the place. The men therefore sat down, in number about five thousand." St. Matthew, in his account, says that five thousand men were fed, without counting the women and children.

"And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks, he distributed to them that were sat down. In like manner also of the fishes, as much as they would, *Quantum volebant.*" In this statement is centred the question of miracle or fraud. No one could make it unless it were true, nor write so positively about it unless he knew it was true, and, having had ocular proof of it, felt that his eyes could not have deceived him. The thought must have presented itself to his mind—*This will never be believed.* Then, "When they were filled—*ut autem impleti sunt*—Jesus said to His disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, lest they be lost. They gathered them up, therefore, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which remained over and above to them that had eaten. Now, those men, when they had seen what a miracle Jesus had done, said, This is of a truth the prophet that is to come into the world. Jesus therefore, when He knew that they would come to take Him by force, and make Him King, fled again into the mountain Himself alone." Perceiving the ovations which threatened Him, Jesus withdrew Himself from the scene; whence we learn

that He did not work miracles in order to glorify Himself. This act appears incompatible with the view advanced by some that Jesus was a man of pretensions, anxious to gain credit for His doctrines by creating a popular superstition, and that the evangelical miracles were therefore mere acts of conjuring. If Jesus had desired to win glory for Himself, it were enough for Him to consent to and pride Himself on these movements of public enthusiasm. St. Luke passes the same remark, after recording other miracles of our Lord — "And having dismissed the multitude, He went alone into a mountain to pray" (St. Matt. xiv. 23). This mode of acting would have been extraordinary if Jesus was, as some pretend, only a cheat and an impostor. Criticism is forced to lay down its arms before the warning note of truth and holy simplicity which the whole narrative gives forth.

The story of the stilling of the tempest in St. Matthew proves likewise that the Gospel miracles are not legends, and that the Apostles understood Jesus to be God. They were on the Lake of Genesareth, or sea of Tiberias, when Jesus suddenly appeared to them. . . . "The boat, in the midst of the sea, was tossed with the waves: for the wind was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking upon the sea. And they, seeing Him walking upon the sea, were troubled, saying, It is an apparition! And they cried out for fear. And immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, Be of good heart: it is I, fear ye not. And Peter, in his caution, making answer, said, Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come to Thee upon the waters. And He said, Come. And Peter, going down out of the boat, walked upon the water to come to Jesus. But, seeing the wind strong, he was afraid. And when he began to sink, he cried out, saying, Lord! save me! And immediately Jesus, stretching forth His hand, took hold of him, and said to him, O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt?"

Peter had confidence, but this was slightly tinged with doubt, otherwise Jesus would not have thus reproached him—"And when they were come up into the boat, the wind ceased. And they that were in the boat came and adored Him, saying, Indeed Thou art the Son of God."

The naturalness of this recital, with no exaggeration in depicting the fury of the storm, with no laboured dialogues between those present, no attempt to heighten the effect of the scene although in itself most solemn—all this abundantly proves the absence of romance. Its very simplicity imparts grandeur to the narrative.

The fourteenth chapter of the Acts contains the account of a miracle which shows how simple and humble the Apostles themselves were before God. The miracle is unique and worthy of God's goodness. Paul and Barnabas were in Asia Minor, and had preached in the synagogue. Their hearers had formed two parties, one comprising those converted by the preaching of the Apostles; the other, those hostile to them. But none were indifferent, and none were scoffers.

"And there sat a certain man of Lystra, impotent in his feet, a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked. This same heard Paul speaking. Who, looking upon him, and seeing that he had faith to be healed, said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet! And he leaped up and walked. And when the multitudes had seen what Paul had done, they lifted up their voice in the Lycaonian tongue, saying, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men. And they called Barnabas, Jupiter: but Paul, Mercury: because he was chief speaker. The priest also of Jupiter that was before the city, bringing oxen and garlands, before the gate, would have offered sacrifice with the people. Which, when the Apostles Barnabas and Paul had heard, rending their clothes, they leaped out among the people, crying, Ye men, why do ye these things? We also are mortals, men like unto you, preaching to you to be converted from these vain things to the living God, who made the heavens and the earth, and the sea, and all things that are in them. Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless, He left not Himself without testimony, doing good from heaven, giving rains and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness. And speaking these things, they scarce restrained the people from sacrificing to them."

It is difficult to discover in this recital, at once sublime

and simple, the coined platitudes of a forger, unless, indeed, we suppose one capable of the act to have been, at the same time, estimable for his qualities both of heart and mind.

Another miracle, recorded with equal simplicity and worthy of the Divine Power, is that wrought by St. Peter at the Beautiful Gate of the temple. "Now Peter and John went up into the temple at the ninth hour of prayer. And a certain man, who was lame from his mother's womb, was carried; whom they laid every day at the gate of the temple that is called Beautiful, that he might ask alms of them that went into the temple. He, when he had seen Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked to receive an alms. But Peter, with John, fastening his eyes upon him, said, Look upon us. But he looked earnestly upon them, hoping that he should receive something of them. But Peter said, Silver and gold I have none, but what I have I give thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, arise and walk. And, taking him by the right hand, he lifted him up, and forthwith his feet and soles received strength. And he, leaping up, stood and walked, and went in with them into the temple, walking and leaping, and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God. And they knew him, that it was he who sat begging alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened to him. And as he held Peter and John, all the people ran to them to the porch, which is called Solomon's, greatly wondering. But Peter seeing, made answer to the people, Ye men of Israel, why wonder you at this? or why look you upon us as if by our strength or power we had made this man to walk? The God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified His Son Jesus, whom you indeed delivered up and denied before the face of Pilate, when he judged He should be released. But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you. But the author of life you killed, whom God hath raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses" (Acts iii. 1-16).

The strong points of this narrative are, first, the magnificent exhortation of St. Peter addressed to the lame man; and next, his ascription to God alone of the whole honour of the miracle wrought. It is repugnant to our feelings to imagine that the faith of Peter in Jesus Christ, together with his humility after he had performed this miracle, could have been the mere invention of any writer or the work of some Christian romancer giving full scope to his imagination. Such a man could never have invested his creation with so much moral beauty and grandeur.

All the miracles of the Gospel are recounted with the same persuasive sincerity, and with eminently characteristic descriptions. It is impossible to doubt such records as these. They are so unstudied, so full of meaning, and so entirely out of the usual course, that if they were inventions, the marvellous facts thus related must necessarily have been themselves fictitious. The language is inseparable from the miracle which it records. It is to the miracle what the inscription is to a piece of money. Besides, the multiplicity of very precise and characteristic details excludes the hypothesis of a legendary compilation. Lastly, these miracles were facts which came under the observation of competent judges, the most notable having been worked before a great number of witnesses, in sight of the enemies of Jesus, and in the presence of embittered gainsayers, who maliciously "watched Him," as the Gospel tells us (St. Luke xv. 1). Now, even such prejudiced witnesses as these never once denied the more than human power of Christ.

How radical is the difference between the Gospel miracles and those claimed by Jewish legend or pagan mythology! The contrast is so striking, that it elicited this avowal from M. Rénan—"The element of the marvellous in the Gospel has all the sobriety of common sense when compared with he apocrypha of the Talmud and other Jewish writings, or with the mythologies of Indo-European origin."[1] It needs but little effort in studying the Gospels to forget that one is reading about miracles. So simple is the recital, so admirably do the facts harmonise with the frame in which

[1] "Études d'histoire religieuse," p. 177.

they are set, and with the surroundings in which they were produced. According to a certain critic, the sacred writers are always either very ill-judged or very clever in their productions. As for cleverness, they did not require that. And how did they show their want of judgment? This supposes, at all events, calculation, a choice between aims, some definite plan of action, . . . and we deny absolutely that anything of this description is to be found in them. "Men do not adopt this style in their inventions" is a saying as applicable to the form as it is to the matter of the evangelical narratives. Such plainness of language, such clearly defined prominence given in the narration to facts so sublime, could arise from nothing short of complete self-effacement on the part of the writers in presence of the holy truths which they proclaim. When a man invents a romance of the marvellous, the high tone which he assumes betrays the absence of truth in his assertions, whereas an honest man's character is revealed in his whole bearing and manner of speech.

It is truth alone which can attain to be both grand and simple. The Gospel must be taken in a literal sense; its supernatural facts, its cures, its exorcisms, the pacifying of the elements, the violating or suspending of the laws of nature—all these must be accepted without reserve. This is not too much to ask; it is, indeed, scarcely sufficient for rendering intelligible the triumphant progress of its doctrines. Under the circumstances of the times and state of society, nothing short of the power of miracle could startle the world, overturn received ideas, entirely change the moral and social condition of nations, and open out before them not merely a wider and purer, but also an absolutely new horizon. The supernatural and miraculous element can never be expunged from the Gospels. Christianity commenced with the "folly" of the supernatural; she will always conquer by its means, and, were it possible for it to perish, she would perish by the same means.

VII.

Hence the simple study of the Gospels, if it be undertaken with an unbiassed mind and in good faith, suffices

to subvert every theory propounded against Christian supernaturalism. Rationalistic explanations, destructive of its history, have been attempted and ever will be attempted by perverse minds; but in vain. The mark of the Divinity is there. However many objections may be accumulated, the fact remains that he who attentively reads the New Testament, and indeed the whole Bible, feels profoundly convinced that more than human agency had part in its composition. Many a great mind has studied and discussed the entire controversy concerning Jesus Christ, and has eventually become converted to Him only by reading attentively and re-reading the New Testament. He who reads it will find therein a power of persuasion, a character of majestic simplicity and Divine truth to be found nowhere else. Everything harmonises so perfectly, the miracles with the doctrines, and the life of the Master with His death. It is an indestructible whole. In vain may you try to set the narrators of these histories in contradiction one with another, in vain attempt to explain away by subtle conjecture what they relate as faithful, artless witnesses; it matters not. The Divine character of the Gospel is impressed upon all its parts, whereof the proof is contained in the effect which it produces upon our souls. The New Testament comprises more than the accuracy of Matthew's recollections, the genius of Paul, or the piety of John. There flows from these books a hidden virtue, which moves and subjugates the soul. These men could not have spoken thus; human hearts could never of themselves have enkindled so pure and ardent a fire of love.

"As for me," wrote Ustazade Sylvestre de Sacy, "I declare sincerely that in whatever state of mind I have been, no doubt or objection against a single chapter of the Gospels has ever crossed it. I do not discuss, I do not reason. The spirit of God is there; I feel it. And if I am mistaken, it is my own mature judgment that is at fault, it is the idea which I have formed of God that deceives me. Such error I cannot now abandon without distrusting everything, and falling into absolute scepticism."[1]

[1] "Variétés littéraires."

A story is told of St. Jerome that an angel once scourged him with rods, and reproached him for reading Cicero with more zest than the Gospel! May it not be said that the greater number of us deserve a like chastisement, a like reproach.

Ignoratio Scripturarum, says St. Jerome, *ignoratio Christi est*—"To be ignorant of Scripture is to be ignorant of Christ."[1]

Both the essence and the inimitable form of the Gospel narratives are such as to have forced one of the boldest spirits that controversial philosophy has ever produced, to recognise in terms which cannot be too often repeated, "That the sanctity of the Gospel speaks to the heart; that the essays of philosophers, with all their pomp of language, show very small beside it; and that it is impossible for a book so sublime and so simple to be the work of ordinary men, or for Him whose history it is to be Himself but a man. We must, he says, be singularly full of prejudice, and strangely blind, to venture on a comparison between the son of Sophronisca and the Son of Mary, for if the life and death of Socrates were those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus were those of a God. Furthermore, we cannot call the history of the Gospel pure invention, since this is not the manner in which men invent; and indeed the facts of the life of Socrates, which no one doubts, are less well attested than those of Jesus Christ. Again, the conjecture made only removes the difficulty one step back, without destroying it; in fact, it would be more impossible to conceive how several men could have leagued together to fabricate a book, than that one man alone should have furnished its subject-matter; and, in a word, the Gospel possesses marks of truth so clear, so perfectly incontestable, that its inventor would be a more wonderful personage than its hero."[2]

[1] Leo XIII., in his Encyclical, addressed to all Catholic Bishops, 18th November, 1893, on "The Study of Holy Scripture," says—"The solicitude of the Apostolic office naturally urges and compels us to desire that this grand source of revelation (the Bible) should be made both safely and abundantly accessible to the flock of Jesus Christ." Similar sentiments have been expressed by many former Pontiffs. This is very different from the strange fancy, current among uneducated Protestants, that "Catholics are forbidden to read the Bible"!

[2] "Émile," III., p. 182.

We believe, in the first instance, on the authority of the Church; but we are at liberty afterwards to strengthen our faith by the study of texts and the examination of facts. Yet it is principally in the experience of the Christian life, and in the reading of the Gospel, that we feel Jesus Christ to be God. Every Christian can apply to his own case the words of the Sichemites to the Samaritan woman—"We now believe, not for thy saying; for we ourselves have heard Him, and know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world" (St. John iv. 42). "Let us return to the Holy Gospel," says M. Wallon, "and ask but this one thing of its assailants, namely, that they take it up again themselves, and read it in simplicity of heart. Controversy has its evil influences, and he who boasts that he enters upon the discussion of these questions free from all pre-conceived ideas, is himself, all the while, the slave of a prejudice, which is in no degree less the master of his soul from the fact of his having banished faith out of it. The study of the sacred text is fraught with a latent power not granted to any line of argumentation. It triumphs without inflicting any wound, it calms the mind when irritated by the heat of controversy, and if we are justly amazed at finding that a book so full of sweetness has provoked so many bitter contentions, it is at the same time to that very book that we go to procure the remedy." [1]

VIII.

Mgr. Ginoulhiac has shown very clearly that the various theories put forward by modern schools concerning the origins of Christianity are but reproductions of ancient opinions and plagiarisms of Gnostic teaching under different forms.[2] The unblushing denials, not merely of the authenticity, but even of the antiquity of the Gospels, of the Acts, and several of the Epistles; the alleged diversity of doctrine among the first disciples of Jesus;

[1] "De la croyance due à l'Évangile," p. 488.

[2] In Scriptural interpretation, as in many other subjects, progress is not a parabola with a continually increasing ordinate, but a curve with *maxima* and *minima* valves, according to the ancient axiom—"Much shall be revived which has already died out"—*Multa renascentur, quæ jam cecidere.*

the idea, as resulting from the above denials and allegations, that Jesus Christ did not deliver to His Apostles a new and definite system of doctrine, present no new theories to us. "When we have deeply and reflectively studied the original monuments of Christianity," says Mgr. Ginoulhiac, "we are neither surprised at all these theories nor alarmed for the Church, but we involuntarily feel great pity in regard of the modern critics who seem so confident and so self-satisfied.

There is hardly one assertion of the new criticism that we do not find expressed in identical terms, though under a different form, or springing from a different motive, in one or other of the sects which the Church had to combat during the first and second centuries of her existence. If any writer would have us accept only the Gospel of St. Mark, Cerinthus, that bitter heresiarch of the end of the first century, who hated St. John, did this before him. Does another propose to limit St. Matthew's Gospel to the discourses of Jesus Christ, suppressing all the first chapters as legendary, he joins hands with the Ebionites. Our critics, having one and all a great repugnance to the Gospel of St. John, are not herein without their predecessors. Marcion acknowledged only St. Luke, and mutilated his Gospel according to the necessities of his own system. He rejected also the Acts and the pastoral Epistles of St. Paul to Titus and to Timothy, thereby giving the note to the school of Tübingen. Our modern critics are in accord with their ancient brethren on the point of the *criteria* to be employed for discerning true writings from false. Ebion, Cerinthus, Basilides, and Marcion did not reject the supernatural; but, as with our later critics, they rejected books universally received, not on historical grounds, but from motives prompted by their dogmatic prejudices."[1] Thus, modern criticism follows the footsteps of gnosticism in pretending that the Apostles were not of one accord in what they taught. For the Gnostics, like our Higher Critics, insist much on the dissension between St. Peter and St. Paul, of which

[1] "Les origines du christianisme," vol. i. See, for further details, Mgr. Ginoulhiac's excellent work, which we may hope ere long to have in an English version.

mention is made in the Epistle to the Galatians, attributing this dissension, as our modern critics do, to divergence of doctrine. Such is the character, the ingrained vice of error. It pretends to be young and progressive, while it is unable to dissemble its decrepitude. It moves in a vicious circle, going round and round for ever. If we approach it near enough to look it in the face, the signs of age are clearly recognisable on its withered features.

Before concluding this chapter it will be a satisfaction to hear how vigorously the rationalistic interpreters of the Sacred Books demolish one another. No severity on our part could exceed theirs when treating of their respective opinions. For instance, M. Rénan abuses Voltaire because the latter maintained that there were "fifty-four Gospels." This saying Rénan stigmatises as "buffoonery, as superficial and scurrilous infidelity, and as criticism of the lowest type." M. Rénan castigates Voltaire as one would an insolent street-boy. He grants, however, thus much in his favour—"The learning with which Voltaire combats Christianity is of the superannuated kind, but yet he is stronger in his old age than his adversaries, who have only eloquence on their side."[1]

Paulus, Weisse, Ebrard, and Ewald had done away with miracles; but Strauss has destroyed all these critics in their turn. Baur, Réville, and Rénan have torn Strauss in pieces, but Rénan himself has been riddled through and through by contemporary critics. Strauss, in his first work on the "Vie de Jésus," refuted, one by one, with pitiless logic the explanations of Dr. Paulus; and the system of natural explanation has never recovered from this blow. To Weisse, Strauss remarks that he wishes he could find "a philosophy fit to stand on its own legs without borrowing the crutches of religion for its support," casting after him this Parthian shot by way of good-bye—"Have we not had enough of fools' play? Is it not time to turn away with disgust from an author who, with his eyes open, obstinately entrenches himself in his absurdity?"[2]

Ebrard is accredited with "orthodoxy carried to the

[1] "Histoire critique des livres de l'Ancien Testament," by Kuenen, Pierson's translation, vol. i.; introduction by Rénan.
[2] "Leben Jesu," p. 131.

extent of shamelessness" and "sins against good taste that shock the better feelings of honest men."[1] And he casts ridicule on the arguments of Ebrard in the following manner:—"I know very well that they are bad, but they are much too good for you, and they will always be good as long as the Church has places and pensions to distribute.[2]

In respect of Ewald, Strauss declares that his "long and pretentious discussion on the Resurrection adds nothing to the subject which he (Strauss) had not himself already adduced, with less unction, no doubt, but with very much less of unmeaning verbiage." He advises him to carry on his "obscure jargon no further," and to do as he does—"make manure of the rubbish of exegetic criticism and of the vaunted phenomena of nature." "We see here," he says, criticising the exegetic works of Ewald, "the half-philosophy and half-independence, the random admixture of sound criticism and capricious dilettanteism, which characterise this man everywhere, and strip his work on the Gospels of all interest save the simple interest of curiosity."[3]

Strauss is in turn refuted by Baur, who had been his master, and by M. Réville. Baur is in complete opposition to Strauss on the origin of our Gospels. That which, for Strauss, is the spontaneous creation of a popular mythology, is, on the contrary, for Baur, the conscientious and deliberate work of one who labours hard to make his opinions prevail. "Having no sympathy either with history or with fact," says M. Rénan, "Strauss never gets beyond the ideas of mythism and symbolism. One might say that, in his view, the events of Christianity were outside the domain of real existence and natural life. All realistic exegesis was completely compromised in his eyes, and he believed it necessary to replace this by a theory which, without being subject to the same difficulties, would apply with inflexible rigour to the whole extent of the sacred text. We understand now how it is that Strauss's book, in spite of its celebrity (this being, perhaps, a little exaggerated!) stands alone, of its

[1] "Leben Jesu," p. 39.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 49.
[3] "Nouvelle Vie," vol. i., pp. 42, 225.

kind, and satisfies no one. The historian finds it bare of facts; the critic, too uniform in its processes; the theologian, founded upon an hypothesis subversive of Christianity."[1] Elsewhere Rénan makes an objection against this abuse of mythism which Strauss and his school would hardly have found it possible to rebut. He says, in a remark which we may repeat, that "it would be a fatal mistake for an historian to listen too much to his natural repugnances in this matter, and thus avoid objections which may be made against the character of Jesus, or to suppress facts which, in the eyes of his contemporaries, occupied the first place. It might be convenient to say that these were additions of disciples much inferior to their Master, who, unable to conceive His real grandeur of character, endeavoured to gain fame for Him by a prestige unworthy of Him. But, then, the four narrators of the life of Jesus are unanimous in proclaiming His miracles."[2] And in another place he observes—"In the school of Tübingen solid testimony is rejected, and feeble hypotheses are substituted instead."[3] Strauss is equally annihilated by M. Réville. "The criticism of the Gospel," says this writer, "is henceforth to be cleared of nebulosity and Hegelianism. M. Strauss at its head obstinately loved to leave it in the vague. But one may not, in these days of serious science, accept the picture of an imaginary Christ plastered over the figure of a degenerate Jew. When we are able to approach as near to His person as the two historical documents transmitted by the synoptics allow us to do, it ill becomes us to attempt to evaporate Him into an impalpable shadow. No plastic art can form creations so thoroughly real. Are we to believe that this earth was formerly inhabited by nothing but spectres?"[4] Finally—"The results of Strauss's criticism," says his own historian, M. Hanssrath, "cannot be sustained from any point of view — historical, philosophical, or religious."[5]

M. Rénan, in his turn, is very especially singled out for

[1] "Études d'histoire religieuse," 7th edition, pp. 161, 162.
[2] "Vie de Jésus," p. 265.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. xxiii.
[4] Dr. Strauss, vol. i., p. 169.
[5] Pp. 27, 28.

denunciation. We know how he is estimated among ourselves,[1] and strangers regard him with no greater favour. Kuehn, one of the most distinguished German rationalists, compares the "Vie de Jésus" of Rénan with Eugène Sue's work, "The Mysteries of Paris," and he pledges himself that Rénan will "never again attempt to make a new history of the apostolic world in six volumes only." Strauss ridicules the natural interpretation of Rénan, and "the want of solidity in the style into which he so often falls, after the example of Paulus and Venturini." The Church knows by experience that she can trust to true science to demolish all that false science can advance against her. "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the prudence of the prudent I will reject," says Holy Writ (1 Cor. i. 19).

The adversaries of Christianity cannot escape the application to themselves, without even one exception, of the famous saying of a German rationalist—"We have not yet explained Jesus"—*Jesum explicatum nondum habemus.* "We are still ever seeking." This is the latest utterance of the last contemner of the truth. It may be said that all these critics agree in denying the Divinity of Jesus Christ, a fact which, at first sight, might appear to be in their favour. But it would help these savants much more if they could give us any luminous proof that Christ belongs to legend. They have done this for Mahomet, for Confucius, for Brahma. Men, mere men, have been often enough broken against the hard, cold stone of criticism, age after age. But Jesus! Is He nothing but a man? Our enemies prove plainly, by their very contradictions and doubts, that this question has yet to be answered by them. M. Rénan exclaims—"And as for Jesus? It will be alleged against me that there must have been an incomprehensible reason for His disciples loving Him to the point of entire faith in His resurrection, and of the acknowledgment of something superhuman in Him—the accomplishment, namely, of the

[1] The final blow was given to Rénan by Herbert Spencer. The day after the death of the author of the "Vie de Jésus" Spencer was asked what he thought of Rénan. "I have never read," he said, "a single line of that author."

Messianic ideal—as One destined to preside over the complete renovation of heaven and earth."[1]

Reuss, strongest amongst the critics, devotes two pages to the expression of his anguish in the presence of this unique figure of the Christ; while Keim says great things in his "Jesus of Nazareth." Strauss, too, draws some consolation to himself by making this avowal at the end of his last volume—"No, it cannot be that God should have made our salvation depend upon a problem so complicated as is that of the origin of Christianity, not one man in a thousand being able to pronounce upon it with any certainty." Although these lines contain an attack and an objection very widely known, yet they also contain the confession that their author had failed to prove that Christianity is false. Why does the unbeliever feel himself in a state of such uncertainty in the presence of Christ Himself, of His life, and of His work? Contemporary critics, in spite of the fertility of their imaginations, have not been able to explain this in any of their writings. If a really luminous refutation of the claims of Jesus and of Christianity had existed; if, indeed, our adversaries had discovered even one decisive objection against the supernatural element in the origin of Christianity, such refutation would have become widely known; so decisive an objection would speedily become the common property of all. In our day no intelligent man, if he knew anything of the question, would be able, in spite of himself and of his good-will, to believe. But if, on the contrary, there are many millions of well-instructed Christians who are thoroughly convinced on this point, it is because those who have attempted to destroy man's faith in Christianity, and to strip Christ's Person of its Divinity, have entirely failed in their effort.[2]

Curiously enough, the author of this treatise places on the title page of his book the text, which, in the course of its pages, he appears entirely to forget:—

"CANST THOU, BY SEARCHING, FIND OUT GOD?"

[1] "Le Christ cent cinquante ans après Jésus Christ," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1st November, 1881, p. 110.

[2] The following quotation from a cleverly written essay by an Agnostic well worthy of attentive consideration. He says—"So far as the

ruination of happiness is concerned (by the rejection of faith), no one can have a more lively perception than myself. . . . It equally becomes my obvious duty to stifle all belief of the kind which I perceive to be the noblest, and to discipline my intellect with regard to this matter into an attitude of the purest scepticism. And forasmuch as I am far from being able to agree with those who affirm that the twilight doctrine of the 'new faith' is a desirable substitute for the waning splendour of 'the old,' I am not ashamed to confess that, with this virtual negation of God, the universe to me has lost its soul of loveliness; and although from henceforth the precept to 'work while it is day' will doubtless but gain an intensified force from the intensified meaning of the words that 'the night cometh when no man can work,' yet when at times I think, as think at times I must, of the appalling contrast between the hallowed glory of that creed which once was mine, and the lonely mystery of existence as now I find it, at such times I shall ever feel it impossible to avoid the sharpest pang of which my nature is susceptible. For whether it be due to my intelligence not being sufficiently advanced to meet the requirements of the age, or whether it be due to the memory of those sacred associations which to me, at least, were the sweetest that life has given, I cannot but feel that for me, and for others who think as I do, there is a dreadful truth in those words of Hamilton: 'Philosophy having become a meditation, not merely of death, but of annihilation, the precept, Know thyself, has become transformed into the terrific oracle to Œdipus—Mayest thou ne'er know the truth of what thou art.'"—"A Candid Examination of Theism," by Physicus, p. 114.

CHAPTER IV.

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST — THE POWERLESSNESS OF UNBELIEF TO EXPLAIN THE GENESIS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.

"The Resurrection of Christ is the shibboleth of those whose views are most opposed to one another on things in general."—STRAUSS, "Essais d'histoire religieuse," p. 74.

"How could a lie have inspired them with such courage?"—"Orig. lib. contra Celsum."

"Who before was a blasphemer and a persecutor and contumelious. But I obtained the mercy of God, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief." —1 Tim. i. 13.

THE striking results which we have deduced from our discussion upon the authenticity of the Gospels, and upon their interpretation, pre-supposes a very long and difficult process of investigation respecting the authenticity of the texts and the hypotheses which may be proposed for their interpretation.

But there remain three facts absolutely independent of these discussions—facts which unbelief recognises as true, and of which no merely natural explanation can be admitted. These facts form the genesis of the Christian faith. Unbelief admits them without reserve, and they are as follows:—(1) The unhesitating belief of the Apostles in the fact of the bodily resurrection of Christ; (2) their faith in the Divinity of their Master and the heroic courage which that faith gave to them; (3) the transformation of St. Paul from a most fervent Jew into the most convinced of Christians. Unbelief is completely nonplussed when it attempts to explain how certain poor peasants mistook for the Deity one who was nothing more than man; how they accepted as their ideal of holiness a Jew, whose virtues did not rise above the standard of ordinary excellence; how it

was that the Apostles became all at once the victims of an hallucination under the same circumstances and for the same object; how it was possible for an epidemic of folly to seize upon them; how a fraud could have inspired them with so great courage; how an intellect so grand as that of St. Paul—a man so learned in the Scriptures—could, through the effect of some passing mental disturbance, become, for the rest of his life, the militant and victorious Apostle that he was; and how, in fine, it was possible for him to have been a "madman" and yet form ideas so full of beauty and teach a doctrine so full of exalted sentiment. Unbelief has never yet been able to escape from this triple dilemma.

But first, since the chief foundation upon which the invincible faith of the Apostles and of St. Paul rests is the miracle of the Resurrection, we shall commence by placing this fact, upon which everything else depends, beyond the reach of all doubt or question.

I.

Among all the miracles of the Christian religion there can be no doubt that the miracle of the Resurrection of Christ from the dead is the greatest. We shall discuss this miracle by itself, because it is not only proved, as all the Gospel miracles are, by the authenticity and genuineness of the books which narrate it, and by the character of the narratives themselves, but also by their consequences, as well as by facts intimately connected with the Resurrection which take it for granted. This is, in truth, the supreme miracle, environed by many others, and resting upon proofs which defy all adverse criticism; it forms the strongest proof of the Divine origin of Christianity, and is the rock on which it is founded. Much time may be wasted in cavilling over the apparent contradictions to be met with in the Gospels, or in discussing the canonicity of the Sacred Books, the teaching of the Antenicene Fathers, the Great Schism, or the scandalous lives of certain occupants of the Papal Chair, but in the presence of the tremendous miracle of the Resurrection, no man can say anything.

The rock on which our Faith rests securely is the

immovable conviction of the earliest witnesses for Christ that their Master in very truth rose from the dead. It is owing to the fact of the Resurrection that the attacks directed against the Gospels are utterly valueless in regard of the end proposed. What the enemies of Christianity desire to destroy, along with the authenticity and genuineness of the Gospels, is the evidence of the miracles on which our faith is based. Even supposing that the authenticity of the Gospels were disproved, it could then indeed no longer be established that Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount, or that He healed the sick or raised the dead to life, but not the less the truth of the historical fact of His Resurrection would still remain unimpaired.[1] Even were we to recognise nothing in the Gospels than an echo of the reports current in the first generation of Christians, we would be compelled to admit that all these accounts were founded upon the evidence that Christ had risen from the dead. Nothing can be understood if this fact be not laid down from the very first. Of what use is it to question whether Christ has raised the dead, if He has in truth raised Himself? "In this faith is our life, in this faith is our hope," teaches one of the venerable proses of the Church's liturgy. If Christ be not risen from the dead, as St. Paul declares, our preaching were but a preaching to the air, our faith but an illusion. It is clear we would be false witnesses on God's behalf, by testifying against Him, if we asserted that He had not raised Christ from the dead. Indeed, if Jesus be not risen, Redemption is a chimera, and the expectation of a blessed and happy eternity is another idle fancy. Humanity believed that it had found, in presence of the vacant tomb in which Christ had lain, its peace, salvation, and glory. But unless the Resurrection is a fact, humanity must henceforth content itself with groping its way in impenetrable darkness towards an unknown hereafter.

Now, first of all, it is a fact beyond dispute, admitted by intelligent unbelievers, that the disciples of Christ proclaimed the Resurrection of their Master, in spite of His enemies, a very short time after the event; indeed, on the morrow of His ascension. It is no less certain that upon

[1] See "Origines du christianisme," Chap. x., by Mgr. Ginoulhiac.

the very spot where this marvel occurred, as also in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, and in the adjoining regions, it was accepted as an indubitable truth by a very large number of people. Those who have since called it in question have been unable to adduce sufficient reason for doing so. The author of the Acts sums up the whole conduct of the Apostles at the commencement of their ministry in these words—"With great power the Apostles bore witness to the Resurrection of Jesus Christ" (Acts iv. 33). Nothing that is recorded in the Acts can be true if the Resurrection is false; everything turns on it. It explains the cause of the election of the Apostle Matthias. The first sermons of St. Peter are founded upon it. The treatment of the disciples by the chief priests was the result of the preaching of the Resurrection. St. Stephen's discourse (Acts vii. 55-59), no less than that of St. Paul, pointed directly to it (Acts xiii. 30; xvii. 3). It is found in the Epistles of St. Peter, St. John, and in the Apocalypse, no less than in the Epistle to the Hebrews. It was received without contradiction as a fact by all contemporary writers.

From the very first there has been a "great cloud of witnesses," and Sunday became the weekly commemoration of the day on which our Lord rose from the dead. In the beginning of Christianity this great miracle was annually commemorated in the Paschal Feast. One of the Asiatic Churches adopted the fourteenth day after the March moon for its Easter commemoration. The rest, with few exceptions, celebrated it, as in Rome, on the Sunday following the moon. St. Polycarp visited Rome for the express purpose of justifying the custom of his part of the Church, but so strong was the general attachment to this traditional festival, that those who followed the Eastern usage were pronounced heretics, under the title of Quartodecimans. Jews and pagans record that Christ's Resurrection was preached. Celsus affirms that the Christians built their faith upon it, saying that Jesus was seen alive by His disciples after His death.[1] St. Justin relates in his Dialogue that, immediately after the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Jews sent emissaries throughout the world, charged to announce that an impious sect had been founded by one

[1] "Orig. contra Celsum," ii. 54; liii. 22.

Jesus of Galilee, and that His disciples, having removed His corpse by night from the tomb in which He had been buried after crucifixion as a malefactor, went about deceiving the credulous by stating that He had risen from the dead and had ascended into heaven.[1] In acting thus the adversaries of early Christianity gave clear proof of the great importance which both the primitive Christians and they themselves attached to the fact of Christ's Resurrection. It is evident, therefore, that from the first Christianity was convinced of the Resurrection of its Founder.[2]

We have now reached the fundamental point in our dispute with the enemies of the Cross. All acknowledge that if Jesus Christ really rose from the dead, He was at any rate the Ambassador of God. Every one who admits this miracle, implicitly admits all those which are recorded in the New Testament; hence the continued efforts of Christ's enemies to cast doubts upon it.

We begin by maintaining that not only was Jesus Christ condemned to death, but that He actually died on the Cross. This fact must rigidly be established, because persons have been found to deny it. All the Evangelists agree regarding it. St. John writes—"After the soldiers were come to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs; but one of the soldiers with a spear opened His side, and immediately there came out blood and water" (St. John xix. 32-34). The blood and the water issuing from the wound in His side are proof of His actual death. The centurion also, when questioned by Pilate, certified that Jesus was dead (St. Mark xv. 44, 45). The Apocalypse is no less clear than the fourth Gospel. The twenty-four ancients sing—"Thou art worthy, O Lord, to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; because Thou wast slain" (v. 9). St. Peter says that "Christ also died once for our sins . . . being put to death indeed in the flesh" (1 Peter iii. 18). St. Paul, speaking

[1] "Dial.," iv. 108. "Conf.," No. 17.

[2] The Jews, unlike some modern sceptics, nowhere deny the existence of Jesus, or describe Him as a mythical personage. They regard Him either as an impostor or as a visionary, who "caused the destruction of Israel, the dispersion of those who escaped death, the alteration of the Law, and a change of worship."—*Vide* "The Jewish Religion," M. Friedländer, p. 227 and *passim*. (The learned author of this book is a rabbi whose writings are well known among us.)

of his own people, the Jews, said, "They have killed the Lord Jesus," and he grounds the hope of eternal life upon the truth that "He died for us" (1 Thess. ii. 15; v. 10). In his Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians he puts forward the death of Jesus as the basis of the great unknown mystery of the resurrection of both Jews[1] and Gentiles (Eph. ii. 13-17; Col. i. 20-22). St. Paul returns frequently to this truth in his four chief Epistles, he reminds their recipients that the death of Jesus is an article of faith which he had taught from the first days of his apostolate, and he bears witness that the other Apostles preached it in the same terms as his own, and that it is the groundwork of the faith of all Christians —"Whether I, or they, so we preach and so you have believed" (1 Cor. xv. 11). The belief in the real death of Jesus has been, ever since the event, not only the conviction of all Christians, but the most generally accepted belief of Jews and pagans alike.[2] Finally, the same evidence which attests His death also proves the fact of His burial. No one has, as yet, come forward to assert that the body of Jesus was not deposited in "the new tomb." The synoptical Gospels all recount that Joseph of Arimathea, having received Pilate's permission, wrapped the Body in new linen cloths, and deposited it in a tomb in which no one had been previously buried. St. John adds that Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes of a hundred pounds weight for the embalming; that having taken the Body of Jesus they wrapped it in linen with these aromatic gums, and thus buried it (St. John xix. 39, 40). The application of the hundred pounds weight of perfumes and ingredients to the Body of Jesus, with the bandaging during thirty hours preceding sepulture, must have sufficed to determine whether or no life still lingered, had any doubt on this point existed. The bold denials of the death, and of the circumstances of the

[1] The "thirteenth principle" of the Jewish faith is—"I firmly believe that there will be a resurrection of the dead, at the time when it shall please the Creator, blessed be His name." This doctrine is taught in the Talmud, Midrash, etc. *Vide* Friedländer's "Text-book of the Jewish Religion."

[2] "Jesus the Nazarene . . . was killed by order of a court of law."—"The Jewish Religion," Friedländer, p. 227.

burial, of Jesus occurring in modern times are completely refuted by the evidence of Scripture and antiquity.

How feeble in the presence of such overwhelming evidence is the argument that Jesus simply rose after a few days' rest in the tomb, revived and convalescent. On the morning of the third day Jesus suddenly reappeared full of light and life. On those feet which had been pierced through and through by the nails He was able to walk, without suffering, the two miles which lie between Jerusalem and Emmaus. He was so agile that, during the repast with His two disciples, He suddenly disappeared from their sight, and when they returned to Jerusalem they found Him already there. With the same agility He all at once presented Himself in the chamber where the disciples had assembled. These are not the acts that would naturally be expected of a man who had only just escaped actual death after three hours' crucifixion. They are either simple inventions (and in that case what are we to think of the good faith of the Apostles who narrate them ?), or else they really took place and thus suffice to prove that the return of Jesus to life was not a mere convalescence. Here again Strauss bears witness to the truth—"Could a half-dead man, dragging himself languidly and with difficulty out of his grave, whose terrible wounds must have required the most skilful surgical treatment—could He have conveyed to His disciples the impression that He had vanquished death ? Such a return to life would never have changed their sorrow into joyful enthusiasm, nor have raised their admiration to the height of adoring worship."[1]

Let us now examine the chief hypotheses advanced by unbelief for explaining away the doctrine of the Resurrection. First in the list is the accusation that the body was removed from the sepulchre by the disciples. This objection refutes itself; had they done this how could they have believed in their Master's Resurrection ? They would have been no better than clumsy and unprincipled impostors, who preached up the divinity of another impostor, and this without any benefit accruing; nay, in opposition to their true interests since their act brought them nothing but contemptible failure and persecution. Though unbelievers tell us that the Apostles

[1] "Leben Jesu," 1867, p. 288.

hid or did away with the dead body of Jesus, the historical narratives convince us that they did not. They were not willing to believe in what the others said. Those from Emmaus had difficulty in inducing the rest to believe that they were telling the truth, nor would Thomas accept the word of all the other Apostles together. By accusing them of imposture the Jews sought to paralyse the effect of their preaching, but with little credence among their contemporaries, seeing that it did not prevent the preaching of the Resurrection from being spread throughout the world. The conscientious convictions of those of their day pronounced the Apostles to be upright, honourable, and holy men; and our own consciences, after careful study of their writings, declare the same.

Another objection maintains that it was the Jews, and not the disciples, who took away and secreted the body of Jesus. This hypothesis is a ridiculous assumption on the part of the incredulous. Had they acted thus the Jews would have furnished their opponents with weapons against themselves. They would have destroyed the only tangible argument capable of utterly nullifying the witness of the Apostles. As soon as the latter began to preach, the Jews could have simply produced the dead body of Jesus before their eyes. If they did not do this, if they did not thus silence the Apostles, it was because they could not. How much more profitable would it have been to have made the Apostles touch and recognise the corrupting remains of their former Master, than to beat them with rods! Such a step would much more effectually have both put an end to their preaching and checked their enthusiasm.

Against the assumption of Strauss that the body of Jesus was cast out and denied religious burial, we urge the fact of public notoriety in the time of St. Paul, "that He was buried" (1 Cor. xv. 4). Moreover, such treatment of the bodies of the dead, even of criminals, was not in accordance with either Roman or Hebrew law. According to the former, the body had to be given up as soon as it was claimed.[1] According to the latter, it was expressly ordained that the body of a criminal should be buried on the day of his execution (Deut. xxi. 23). Moreover, in Strauss's

[1] Ulpian, XL., viii., 24, 1.

hypothesis, the existence of "the empty tomb" is unexplained and inexplicable; it savours too much, or too little, of the supernatural. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, what became of His body? How came the authorities who condemned Him to death, and sealed up His tomb, to allow themselves to be befooled? If He did not rise from the dead, how did this condemned criminal find adoring worshippers to pay Him Divine honours?[1] Besides, the interval from the Paschal Feast until Pentecost (when the Resurrection was publicly proclaimed by St. Peter and the rest of the Apostles at Jerusalem) covered but a few weeks, and within so brief a space a corpse would neither have entirely dissolved, nor have changed beyond recognition.[2]

Again, by accusing the disciples of having stolen and hidden the body, the Jews themselves gave the clearest possible evidence that it was no longer in their hands, nor in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. The Body of Jesus, though an object of such special importance both to those who loved and to those who hated Him, was no longer held in possession by either side. Friends and enemies alike sought for it without success. The only possible explanation of its mysterious disappearance, was its appearance again as the Body of Jesus risen from the dead.

Other theories have been suggested, but none of serious moment. Some say that "the Apostles resolved amongst themselves to affirm that Jesus had risen, though they were perfectly convinced of the contrary."

Let us note these points. Jesus remained in the tomb during three days, for which length of time He did not rise. His Apostles therefore had been deceived. What must have been their interior feelings? Shame, restless irritation, and, above all, utter discouragement. No other course seemed open to them than to take to their boats and nets again, and bury themselves in the obscurity of their

[1] No other great founder of religion has received the honours of a Divinity. Neither Confucius, nor Gautama Buddha, nor Zoroaster, nor Moses, nor Mahomet, possessed the attribute of Deity in the eyes of their followers. The Jewish Apostles and disciples of Jesus, recognising His Messiahship, offered Him the worship of adoration due to God alone.

[2] The process of embalming preserved the bodies of the dead for an almost indefinite period. After several thousand years of sepulture, Egyptian mummies may be seen at the British Museum whose features are still perfectly discernible.

primitive occupation. Had they believed that their Master's Body was returned to dust like the bodies of other men, His disciples could by no means have formed the idea of persevering in His work; first, through an honest conviction that after all Jesus was no more than other men, and that they had been imposed upon; and next, at the suggestion of their common sense, that what a man of Christ's power and gifts had failed to do they could never hope to achieve. They could foresee one only result—that of a more signal defeat than He had met with; for their Master, as must be acknowledged by all, whether Christians or not, had acquired an unrivalled prestige, such as no other man had attained in the same degree. Still, let us suppose that His disciples had conspired together to make this false Prophet, this sham Messias, justly condemned and rightly executed, pass for that Son of God whom He had professed Himself to be. What means did they adopt for this purpose? They were but a few in presence of the widespread and bitter prejudice which rankles in the breasts of men, even to this day. They organised a plot far more reckless than any conceived by the most audacious, and, besides this, their lie must succeed in imposing not upon one nation alone, but upon the whole world! How could their great folly receive any colour of truth? What was to be the groundwork of this plot? What was the value of their stake in it? They knew what awaited them, for they had had experience of it during their Master's lifetime. And what would it end in? Violent death, and utter ridicule cast upon their failure! Their enterprise had both earth and heaven against it, and was condemned equally by both! Nevertheless, they threw themselves into their insane task! There had been no defection among them, save that of Judas, who, however, hanged himself in despair. They spoke out with a constancy amounting to obstinacy, and in absolute agreement in all particulars. Their conspiracy was so well organised that it shook the universe; the eyes of the whole world were turned towards these Galilean fishermen. Even when brought before judges and other officials, they betrayed neither fear nor weakness. Not one of them allowed a syllable concerning their conspiracy to escape him. Their

fidelity to one another stood the test of the death penalty. At that time people do not lie! "Then," says the poet, "from the soul's depths the voice of truth comes forth; disguise is cast aside, the reality remains."[1]

You may analyse nature, but will find in it nothing to explain this phenomenon. Hence incredulity itself seems to have completely renounced the thought of holding to this hypothesis. She has become convinced that it could turn to her own confusion were she to make out the Apostles to have been shameless impostors, ready to propagate a gross fraud which they had no real interest in maintaining. This would have been only a fresh act of infatuation. It is true that Rénan, at the commencement of his anti-Christian campaign, dared to apply to the apostolic preaching the epithet "innocent fraud," as though a fraud of this nature could be innocent, or a man could devote himself to the propagation of a lie during his whole life, and seal his testimony with his blood. Strauss candidly confronts the partisans of this foolish theory with the triumphant reply of Origen to Celsus—"How could a falsehood have inspired them with such courage?" Men do not make sacrifices of this kind for the sake of imposing upon the credulous. The mythical school well recognised this. Wallon says—"It would not have taken the trouble to write such imposing works if it had felt it possible to succeed in establishing this argument: 'The Apostles were liars!'" Moreover, the writings of the disciples of Christ breathe forth a tone of the most perfect sincerity. How could these "unlearned and ignorant men" have invented a complete system of theology, which they did not themselves comprehend even during their Master's life? Or how could they have consecrated their lives to such a work? Finally, how can any one fail to be struck by the lofty character of their narrative, as well as by its candour and straightforwardness?

Were the Apostles in any sense visionaries? Did they imagine that they saw Jesus risen, in spite of the fact that He was still in the grave? According to our dogmatising

[1] Nam veræ voces tum demum pectore ab imo
Ejiciuntur, et eripitur persona; manet res.
—Lucretius, Lib. III., 57, 58.

opponents, the delusion commenced with Mary Magdalene, "a woman of ill-regulated fancy" (γυνή πάροιστρος), as Celsus called her, and from her passed on to the Apostles. Her mental infirmity communicated itself to the company of early Christians, after the manner of an epidemic. But this idea does not accord with the facts that follow. At first the Apostles did not in the least expect the resurrection of the body of Jesus. Weizsacker says they confused the idea of resurrection with that of re-incarnation, whereas the hallucinations above referred to supposed a lively expectation of the re-appearance of Jesus in the flesh, and so little did their fancy create the sensible presence of Jesus, that, at the first moment, they did not recognise Him. St. Luke records that the holy women, having returned to the sepulchre, announced to the eleven, and to all the other disciples, what they had seen. They were St. Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Mary the mother of James. Yet the words of these holy women seemed to the Apostles "as idle tales," and they did not believe them (St. Luke xxiv. 9-11). They were, then, men little disposed to credulity, since even on the testimony of ten or twelve persons worthy of belief, they did not hesitate to condemn their statement as absurd. Again we read in St. Luke—"The Apostles were assembled in the upper chamber holding conversation together. Whilst they were speaking, Jesus stood in the midst of them, and said, 'Peace be to you; it is I, fear not.' But they, being troubled and frighted, supposed that they saw a spirit" (*Ibid.*, 36, 37). Here, then, is a text which proves that the Apostles were always afraid of the danger of becoming dupes, and that they did not set themselves to invent apparitions. When an apparition occurred they thought it was a phantom. Jesus proved its reality to them. "Why are you troubled? See My hands and My feet, that it is I myself. Handle and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as you see Me to have. Having said this He showed them His hands and His feet." And when they did not even yet believe, for their very joy made them pause, Jesus asked for food and ate before them (*Ibid.*, 37-43). They could no longer hesitate. After the Resurrection the Apostles said—"Him God raised up the third day and gave Him to be made

manifest, not to all the people, but to witnesses pre-ordained by God, even to us, who did eat and drink with Him after He rose again from the dead" (Acts x. 40, 41). Hallucination, is, therefore, contrary to the evidence of the narrative, and is a theory invented solely in order to meet the exigencies of the objection.

Again, how was it that the apparitions ended so soon after their birth? Let us admit, for a moment, the truth of these visions. If once that particular state be established which produces them, and by means of which they may be extended, at the slightest instigation, possibly to large numbers, it were according to the nature of things that they should continue. In reality, before the conversion of St. Paul, the apparitions of Christ had ceased, and the neophyte found at Jerusalem, especially after the time of St. Peter, nothing but exact and sober recollections, upon which a clearly-established apostolic mission was founded and accepted with a firm and deliberate conviction. It cannot be said "that the wild fancy of one under hallucination gave a risen God to the world." It was not to Mary Magdalene alone that Jesus appeared. He manifested Himself under many circumstances to a multitude of people—to two, to seven, to ten, and to five hundred together. Each of the Evangelists recounts several of these apparitions, and even all of them taken together do not report every instance that occurred. On the day of the Resurrection the Magdalene saw Him; on the evening of the same day, and later, the seven Apostles conversed with Him upon the lake without at first recognising Him. St. Paul tells us of a special apparition to St. Peter. On the evening of the same day He showed Himself in the Cenacle to the Apostles, as Mark, Luke, John, and Paul all unite in declaring. Jesus spoke, ate, showed His wounds, and even allowed His disciples to handle Him and see that He was not a spirit, for He had flesh and bones. A week afterwards another apparition was vouchsafed, for the purpose of convincing the incredulity of St. Thomas, who had not witnessed the first. To sum up the post-resurrection appearances of Christ, we may cite those words of St. Paul which Rénan himself admits to be of "absolute

and unquestionable authenticity"—"Now I make known unto you, brethren, the Gospel which I preached to you, which also you have received, and wherein you stand; by which also you are saved, if you hold fast after what manner I preached unto you, unless you have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all, which I also received: How that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures: And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures: And that He was seen by Cephas; and after that by the eleven. Then was He seen by more than five hundred brethren at once, of whom many remain until this present, and some are fallen asleep. After that He was seen by James, then by all the Apostles. And last of all He was seen also by me, as by one born out of due time. For I am the least of the Apostles, who am not worthy to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God" (1 Cor. xv. 1-9). Supposing that Paul himself laboured under a delusion, he could not have supported his own hallucination by appealing before the Corinthians to Peter, James, and other living Apostles and disciples, as being similarly convinced.

To prove that no constraint obliged the Apostles to admit the fact of the Resurrection, we need only remember the doubts expressed by Thomas—"Except I shall see in His hands the point of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe." Jesus went straight to him and gently reproved him for his obstinacy in rejecting the concordant witness of his brethren. Condescending to his weakness, and yielding to his caprice, Jesus showed him His wounds, and directed him to place his finger in the apertures made by the nails, and his hand in the opening made by the spear in His side, saying to him—"And be not faithless, but believing" (St. John xx. 27). St. John, who relates this, was eye-witness of what occurred. Thomas fell upon his knees, overcome by what he had beheld, exclaiming—"My Lord and my God." We perceive, then, that there was no question of a disembodied spirit here. The Apostles heard the reproofs, commands, and promises of Him whom they believed they actually saw. He not only spoke to them,

He also ate and drank with them, to prove that He was not a phantom, nor a figment of their imagination. The term of active life for St. Peter, and for the rest, had reached to thirty or more years, and there has never existed the slightest doubt of their full health of mind and body. At the time of their death, the Church had already been organised, and numbered some five hundred thousand converts as the fruit of their labours. Such a result is certainly a sufficient proof of sound health. It is, moreover, impossible for any writings to be more coherent, sober, and reasonable than are those of the Apostles. Is it rational to object that twelve persons, then five hundred at once, were victims of hallucination; that five hundred people imagined they saw a person who had no real existence, that they listened to His word and heard His last farewell? The medical profession would do well to notice so extraordinary an event. It is doubtful whether any analogous act of supreme folly could be found in ancient or modern history!

In trying to escape from this dilemma Weiss and Lotze have asserted that, after all, it would be well to admit that something did occur. But this something need be no more than the influence exercised upon their minds by the soul of Jesus after entering the spirit world. By such a contrivance as this would they account for the strong conviction of those who believed in the resurrection. Let us not forget that this so-called spirit of Jesus spoke, moved, acted, ate and drank in the presence of the disciples, for the express purpose of demonstrating that He was not a mere phantom. Mark, in all this, with how great malice certain minds will allow themselves to act. As for the "contradictions" noticed between the narratives of the Resurrection furnished by the Evangelists and by St. Paul, let us examine the difficulty alleged. All these writers agree that the death of Jesus took place on a Friday afternoon, and that it was followed by His entombment in the evening of the same day. All agree in their account of the terror of the disciples, of their lack of confidence in the resurrection of their Master; of their complete inactivity on the day following His death; and of the conviction in the minds of the women that Jesus would not rise from the tomb, since,

on the evening of the same day, they visited the sepulchre for the purpose of honouring the dead.

M. Rénan endeavours to evade the force of the miracle itself, and of the testimony borne to it, by turning both into ridicule. "On a certain day," he says, "the faithful Galileans, having followed the guidance of their spiritual chiefs to the top of one of those mountains to which Jesus had often led them, imagined that they saw Him again. The atmosphere on those heights often presents strange appearances to the eye. The assembled crowd fancied they could trace out a figure dimly visible in the ether, and forthwith they prostrated themselves and adored." And this act of deception Rénan calls "an innocent fraud." [1] For our part, we say that if Jesus did not rise from the dead, those who preached the Resurrection were guilty of an abominable imposture. Referring to our Lord's appearance to Mary Magdalene, Rénan again remarks—"Magdalene fully believed in this picture of her imagination—the intensity of her love created this phantom. Oh! divine power of love, those hallowed moments in which the passion of an infatuated woman gives to the world a risen God." [2] But we reply, if love originated this phantom, Mary Magdalene should have recognised Jesus at once, and not have fallen into the mistake of talking to Him as a stranger. Keim, the chief of the Tübingen school, accusing Rénan of plagiarism from Celsus (who, it is well to know, also refused to accept the evidence of women), writes thus—"We desire to draw the attention of the French critic to the consideration of the evidence of a witness worthy of all confidence—St. Paul himself, who mentions Peter as being among the first witnesses of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

"We further ask him whether he does not admit that there is something even more difficult to explain than the Resurrection of Christ, namely, the foundation and character of the Church if we dispense with the Resurrection? How does he think that the early Church, whose words and acts are so replete with calm wisdom and right reason, was produced out of the bosom of fanaticism

[1] "Vie de Jésus," p. 35.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 434.

and the foolish ravings of visionaries? The visionaries who surrounded the tomb of Jesus Christ must be looked for later among the Apostles, and in the very heart of the Christian community at Jerusalem. The entire first century must have been a scene of blind fanaticism. Does he believe in this grotesque absurdity? Can he convince the world that it existed?"[1] He cannot. Let no one have the hardihood to say that imagination played any part in the apparitions of the Saviour to His disciples. Their incidents are natural and free from all study of effect. The apparition begins and ends at the same instant for all. As long as it lasts all see and hear the same thing. The conviction of the Apostles takes shape gradually. In their intercourse with their risen Lord we observe a mingling of respect, love, and holy familiarity. The instructions given by our Saviour at that solemn time are stamped with a grandeur which no one else could assume. It was then that He gave the Apostles the power of remitting sins, the commission to preach and to convert the world, the counsel to await in silence and prayer their baptism with the Holy Ghost and with fire. Such ideas could not have originated in the minds of the disciples. For the rest, as M. le Hir says, "It is necessary that the truth of the Gospel apparitions be so firmly established that its foundations cannot be shaken, in order that scepticism, no matter how extreme, may accept the historical fact of the apparitions without attempting to account for them. In this matter the form implies the solidity of the foundation, for the phenomena could not be produced except by what was real—itself."[2]

When the miracles of healing wrought by Jesus Christ are under discussion, in their inability to deny them entirely, the plan is to attribute them to the power of fascination residing in so subtle and refined a personality as that of the Teacher of Nazareth. It is, however, impossible to apply this solution to the raising by our Lord of the dead, upon whose nervous system no treatment of any kind can have effect. Nor could His own Resurrection be accounted for by such means. What human agent ever intervened in the mystery of that

[1] Keim, on Rénan's "Vie de Jésus."
[2] "Etudes bibliques," t. II., sec. 2.

sepulchre? Between God and Christ's dead body there was no intermediary. His Resurrection was a fact, or it was a fiction. If the former, we have a miracle of the first class, and St. Peter had full right to assert that "God hath raised up Jesus."

If the natural explanation of the Resurrection is absurd, the mythical theory is inadmissible. Strauss supposes that the Apostles, struck with terror, ended by embracing the notion of a suffering Messias, and, by natural consequence, looked for His Resurrection. St. Luke tells us that this revolution of thought was indeed accomplished in them, but that it was caused by the apparition of Jesus. If this miracle be done away with, it must be replaced by another, for the change in the Apostles would otherwise have been an effect without a cause. They were bound to make sure that their Master had indeed left the tomb; and the Evangelists declare that they did so. Strauss, who rejects the charge of fraud, explains their belief by saying that, after the death of Jesus, all the disciples fled into Galilee, and that it was there the belief in the Resurrection arose. But nothing could be more contrary to the Gospel narrative than such a supposition. The four Evangelists are unanimous in declaring that the Apostles remained at Jerusalem (Matt. xxviii. 7-10; Mark xvi. 7; Luke xxiv. 33, 34; John xx. 10); that they visited the sepulchre (Luke xxiv. 12; John xx. 4); and that, on several occasions, under the most divergent circumstances, they saw Jesus risen (Matt. xxviii. 16, 17; Mark xvi. 12-14; Luke xxiv. 36-53; John xxi. 1-14). All possibility, therefore, of illusion was excluded. The Apostles were not, as Strauss pretends, enthusiasts excited by persecution, for after the death of their Master they were left in great discouragement, as the German sceptic admits in his older work (vol. ii., p. 679).

Their persecution began only when they announced that Christ had risen again. What event roused them so suddenly, and inspired them with the boldness necessary for preaching this great mystery in presence of the murderers of Jesus? It could have been no other than the Resurrection itself, of which they had ocular proof. Both Strauss and Baur reject the idea of imposture,

on the part of the Apostles, as a moral impossibility. "History," says Baur, "is committed to this fact, that in the eyes of the disciples the Resurrection of Jesus Christ was a certain and unimpeachable fact. It is in that true act of faith alone that Christianity finds a foundation sufficiently solid to bear the weight of its whole historical development."[1] Strauss clearly perceived that the hypothesis contrary to his own better explains the fervour of the Apostles on their going forth to conquer the world. He says—"The apologists are right to insist on the importance of the enormous change which came over the spirit of the Apostles. After their profound discouragement and loss of all hope, amounting almost to loss of faith, we find them enthusiastically proclaiming the Messias at the following Pentecost. This alteration in their frame of mind would be inexplicable had nothing occurred in the interval to convince them of the Resurrection of Jesus crucified."[2] "In our opinion," says M. Coquérel, "Dr. Strauss's four volumes tell much less powerfully against the truth of Christianity than other words written by that sceptic, which bear witness to the truth of the religion of Jesus." For instance, Strauss admits that "the historian must acknowledge that the disciples believed firmly in the resurrection of Christ."

We may well reply to him—"The Resurrection is the impregnable rock." There are many points open to discussion, for certain obscurities exist on matters of faith on which we may argue; but there is no possibility of overthrowing the consecutive and decisive proofs adduced by Christians in favour of the Resurrection. Unbelief has never yet been able to make any impression upon the dogma, in spite of her continual assaults. She takes refuge in the oracular utterances of which she has repeatedly varied the form, but they may be summed up in this foregone conclusion—"The supernatural is impossible." Such being the case, it is idle to attempt to convince scepticism of the truth of supernatural events, even were they attested by millions of martyrs. For our part, we

[1] "History of the Church in the First Three Centuries," 2nd ed., pp. 39, 40.
[2] "Leben Jesu," 1864, p. 289.

prefer to find ourselves in accord with men of undoubted sincerity, who say to us, "We have seen, we have touched, we have listened to the voice of Jesus Christ risen," than to place upon our necks the yoke of an oracle of no approved authority, which claims to have established the truth of its points through the force of mere repetition.

II.

The first unanswerable difficulty for unbelievers is the deep-seated conviction of the Resurrection of Jesus which the Apostles ever maintained. This most striking conviction can be explained only by the reality of the prodigy. Without this ground of confidence the sudden and complete transformation of the Apostles would have been a greater miracle than the Resurrection itself. "How was it," says Condillac, "that these timid men became so brave? It was because they were convinced, and that by reason of what they had seen. Every circumstance marking our Lord's appearances proves that they did not believe without hesitation. Were I speaking only of the motives of credibility, or the historical proofs which prevail with us, unbelievers might reply that the Evangelists invented these facts. But the Apostles could not have believed facts which the Evangelists invented as an after-thought. If they believed, it was because they had seen, in which case the statements were not inventions. But there can be no doubt that they did believe."[1]

St. John Chrysostom, in one of his homilies, reduced this demonstration to the following more simple terms:— "It is only too easy to forget, after their death, those whom we have loved most tenderly. The Apostles forsook and renounced Jesus Christ while He was yet alive; but they died for Him after He was crucified. Therefore they saw Him risen." I do not know what can be said in reply to this argument. It is exactly the human nature of the Apostles which supposes and proves, beyond all cavil, that Jesus rose from the dead. It were vain to refuse to accept the evidence of His immediate disciples on the plea that

[1] "Considerations on the Progress of Religion in the First Four Centuries."

they were the victims of ignorance, and that their enthusiastic faith was nothing but a morbid craze which urged them beyond control to acts that cost them their lives. Ignorance is not the same as the lack of intelligence. We must remember that those simple men, either as fishermen or publicans, manifested extraordinary ability, for no other men's words have moved the whole world like theirs. "It is not true," says M. de Pressensé, "that they all lived in a state of ignorance. Several of them were men of culture. Saul of Tarsus was in the front rank of the intellectual *élite* of his country. There are no traces in any among them of a blind credulity. They were followers of Jesus Christ from an early date, but a rebuke uttered by Him in a tone of sadness shows that they were slow to believe. They shared the prejudices of their race, and nothing could be less in harmony with their original views than the idea of a Messias crucified and risen again, One whose kingdom is not of this world. Everything around them and within them condemned any such teaching. We know their pain and distress on the day of the crucifixion, and with what difficulty they brought themselves to admit the proofs that the sepulchre no longer contained the Body of Jesus. The doubts of Thomas; the opposition raised by the disciples at Emmaus, who declined to accept the evidence of the women; the violent and persistent incredulity of Saul of Tarsus—all these things combine to show that nothing was further from enthusiasm than the actual state of mind of the Apostles."[1]

The work of Christ, completed at His death, must have remained barren of all fruit had it not obtained belief in His Resurrection. Deprive it of this belief, and Christianity disappears in the death of Christ. Without it there would have been no Apostles. The men designed by Christ to carry on His work, and perpetuate it in their successors, would have remained where they were on the day of His death, disconcerted and depressed, preserving a tender recollection of Him who loved them, but who, after all, either deceived them or else was Himself the victim of an egregious mistake.

[1] "Life of Jesus Christ," pp. 178, 179.

Without the Resurrection there would have been no conversions and no Church, for there is no record of a conversion effected, or a Church founded, otherwise than upon this basis. All that the Apostles taught respecting the Divinity of the Person and of the mission of Jesus Christ; all that the Christian Church has, through its greatest and most saintly fathers and doctors, professed and taught regarding these questions—all this has been founded and deeply rooted for the past nineteen centuries on the truth of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. A convincing argument, moreover, is contained in the question—Would a single believer in Christ have remained true to Him after His apparently abject failure and His legal execution as a malefactor? His death appeared to be a complete refutation of all that He had preached. That these poor men should have remained faithful to Him to the extent of shedding their blood for His sake in presence of the universal execration of His name, is nothing short of a miracle. "The Divine origin of Christianity possesses no more invincible demonstration of its truth than the simplicity, bluntness, ignorance, and incredulity of the Apostles before the death of their Master, contrasted with their courage, their faith, and their spiritual discernment after His Resurrection."[1] If the Apostles had seen nothing, their intrepidity and faith would be alike incomprehensible.

In their conviction of the truth of the Resurrection lies the only reasonable explanation of their zeal and ardour as proselytisers. It enables us to understand the words of St. Peter, speaking in the name of the eleven to the Sanhedrim, in answer to their prohibition to preach in the name of Jesus—"If it be just in the sight of God to hear you rather than God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have heard and seen" (Acts iv. 19, 20). The Apostles had clearly determined to fear neither persons nor consequences; nay, they even "went from the presence of the council rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus, and every day they ceased not, in the temple and from house to house, to teach and preach Christ Jesus" (*Ibid.*, v. 41, 42). St. Paul, beside himself with enthusiasm,

[1] Abbé Frémont, "Conferences on Christianity," 1877-78, p. 285.

exclaims—"The Jews require signs and the Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews indeed a stumbling-block, and unto the Gentiles foolishness; but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. i. 22-24). The martyrs, in countless numbers, laid down their lives to testify to their belief in the Resurrection. If, therefore, we are Christians now, it is because Christ showed Himself to His poor disciples, at first humiliated, refuted, and silenced by the outrages, sufferings, and ignominious death inflicted upon their Master; but afterwards transformed into new men when they beheld Him risen, and conversed with Him during the forty days preceding His Ascension. Thus we observe a fact preached by all the Apostles, as well as by five hundred disciples, who attested it at the very place where it occurred. We are forced in justice to admit the evidence of the eight thousand contemporaries who obeyed the voice of Peter, and again of the men who surrendered their lives as a guarantee of their veracity. No Galilean peasant would offer himself to martyrdom for the mere love of glory. We are not treating of a Mahomet, who inspired his followers with enthusiasm in an entirely different manner. Nothing warrants any such gratuitous assumption as that "the Apostles wished to impose upon the world," or that "they were a set of visionaries," or "a gang of impostors." It is impossible to understand how any one can maintain such theories in spite of the historical facts. Our moral sense must guide us in deciding such questions. After summing up all the texts of the New Testament bearing on the Resurrection, Mgr. Ginoulhiac thus concludes—"Either no reliance is to be placed in human sentiment, and it is impossible to discern the innermost convictions of men by their words, their manner, or their conduct; or else we must grant that the reasoning and the statements of St. Paul bear distinct evidence of a most profound, and, we may venture to add, of a most clear-sighted conviction. Against such convictions and such testimony as this, shared in to the full by the whole Christian world, of what slightest weight can be either the doubts or the formal negations

of the adversaries of Jesus Christ, or even certain difficulties encountered in harmonising the various accounts of the incidents of this mystery?"[1] Lastly, in addition to the witness of the twelve who were martyrs as well as Apostles, stands out the evidence of all Christians in every age, of the very chosen souls of the human race: *Primo avulso, non deficit alter.* The torch of faith passes from hand to hand, but it is ever burning. The testimony is borne from the lips of one to those of another without diminishing anything of its force or clearness. This proof is unique in history, inasmuch as it emanates from numerous and entirely disinterested witnesses, whose worldly interest it was, on the contrary, to escape the rigorous morality which the Gospel enforces on all; but these witnesses—we speak of the early Christians—exposed themselves voluntarily to most cruel tortures and even death, when a single word from them would have set them free.

"Christians have produced irrefragable proofs of the certainty of their convictions. They knew full well the nature of your doubts, objections, and the sophisms of your unbelief, nevertheless they have been willing to lay down their lives, without being in the slightest degree disturbed in their faith; whilst, at the same time their confidence and the strength of their convictions cannot but cause some feeling of discomfort in the depth of the unbelieving mind. Explain if you can in what way Christians believe without sufficient evidence, and how it comes that their mistaken certitude remains not the less irrefutable. During the past eighteen hundred years an explanation has been attempted over and over again without success, and you also will fail like the rest. Do you flatter yourselves that you have greater wit than Voltaire, a deeper feeling than Strauss, or the insinuating subtlety of a Rénan? And yet where now are their proofs in refutation of the Christian faith? On what point is there any agreement or cohesion between them? In truth, the unreality, the uncertainty of the Christian religion is an hypothesis in favour of which not a single atom of genuine proof has ever been discovered."[2]

[1] "Les origines du christianisme," t. II., Chap. x.
[2] H. de Cossoles, "Du doute."

III.

The next difficulty of unbelief, a second dilemma, from which it cannot escape, is the unswerving faith of the Apostles in the Divinity of their Master, and the superhuman courage with which this conviction endowed them.

The faith of the Apostles in the Divinity of Jesus Christ is truly astonishing, and he who studies the New Testament with reverent care and attention will be much struck by this proof. It were difficult for any one to deny that the Apostles believed that Jesus was God. The Gospels show they believed it firmly. We need not discuss the witness which they bore; careful reflection upon it suffices to move us to participate in their faith from the very depth of our soul. The following passages from the sacred text will make a most profound impression upon every thoughtful mind. We hear the exclamation of the beloved disciple—"This is the true God and life eternal" (1 Epist. v. 20). He begins his Gospel by proclaiming the eternal generation of the Word—"In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . . by Him all things were made . . . and the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us" (St. John i.). He concludes his Gospel declaring that "these things are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name" (*Ibid.*, xx. 31). After He had appeased the tempest, the Apostles recognised His Divinity, for they said among themselves—"What manner of man is this, for the winds and the sea obey Him?" (St. Matt. viii. 27). "He hath done all things well," says Mark; "He hath made both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak" (vii. 37). After the miraculous draught of fishes, Peter retired into the hold of the ship, exclaiming—"Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (St. Luke v. 8). If Jesus had been only a man, however great, Peter could not have given expression to this sentiment. On another occasion Peter refused to allow his Master to wash his feet, a refusal which shows clearly what feelings he entertained towards Him. And what a portrait the Galilean fisherman paints of the Christ! It is worthy of Plato. He describes

Him as one "who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth. Who, when He was reviled, did not revile again: when He suffered He threatened not: but delivered Himself unto him that judged Him unjustly. Who His own self bore our sins in His body on the tree" (1 Pet. ii. 22-24). Again, addressing the Jews, he says to them—"God anointed Him (Jesus) with the Holy Ghost, and with power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. And we are witnesses of all things that He did in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they killed, hanging Him upon a tree. Him God raised up the third day and gave Him to be made manifest (Acts x. 38-40). Once more he says—"The God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our Fathers hath glorified His Son Jesus, whom you, indeed, delivered up and denied before the face of Pilate, when he judged He should be released . . . the Author of life you killed, whom God hath raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses" (*Ibid.*, iii. 13). Had St. Peter regarded Him simply as a man of great pre-eminence, he would never have dared to utter such words, for they contain an eulogium which should not be applied to any mere man.

"But we," says St. Paul, "preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews, indeed, a stumbling-block, and unto the Gentiles foolishness; but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. i. 23, 24). Again he says—"Yet to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him" (*Ibid.*, viii. 6). For St. Paul, the only model or ideal upon whom he desires to form himself is Jesus. "Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ" (*Ibid.*, iv. 16; xi. 1). "I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me. And that I live now in the flesh; I live in the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself for me" (Gal. ii. 20). He writes also to the Philippians (ii. 5)—"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the

likeness of men, and in habit formed as a man. He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the Cross. For which cause God also hath exalted Him, and hath given Him a name which is above all names; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, or earth, and under the earth." "As, therefore, you have received Jesus Christ the Lord, walk ye in Him, rooted and built up in Him, and confirmed in the faith. . . . For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead corporally; and you are filled in Him, who is the head of all principality and power" (Col. ii. 6-9). "If they had known the King of Glory, they would never have crucified Him" (1 Cor. ii. 8). Such expressions are the more striking as coming from one who had not known Jesus during His sojourn upon earth. In conclusion, be it observed that the Apostles baptized none but those who confessed with their whole heart that Jesus is the Son of God, as we see in the case of the town of Samaria, and in that of the baptism of the eunuch of Queen Candace (Acts viii. 37). All the apostolic writings attest that they made this dogma the pivot upon which initiation into all the graces necessary for salvation turned, and that they placed it in full relief as the culminating point of Christian belief. The question now arises, How did it happen that the Apostles, being "unlearned and ignorant" men, conceived so unusual an opinion of Jesus Christ, or became convinced that their Master had never been subject to any stain of human frailty, but regarded Him as the equal of God, as God Himself, in the strictest meaning of the term? They saw and heard what they declare that they had seen and heard. This by itself explains their belief in the Divinity of Jesus.[1] For in truth, the chief point lies in this—that

[1] Those who dwell together become acquainted with failings and defects in one another which are not apparent to others. The close intimacy which existed between Jesus and His Apostles would have tended to establish the fact of His mere humanity in the eyes of the Apostles, by revealing in Him the failings inherent in every man's nature. But He was more than human, and He possessed no imperfections; therefore He was Divine. This must have been positively evident to the Apostles, otherwise they could never have deified their Master. No other religious founder, and no saint, however holy, has ever been regarded as the Deity by his disciples. The case of Jesus Christ is unique in the history of the world. It is so because God has only once become incarnate.

these men who knew the God whom the Jews expected, believed that a man was God. One might easily understand how such pagans as those who wished to offer sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas, after seeing one of their miracles, might mistake Jesus for a God after beholding some of His wonderful works. But that Jews, who from infancy had been taught, "Thou shalt not make an image of the Eternal," should have recognised their God in a form of human flesh, subject to all the necessities of human nature, as they could see from day to day, and should have regarded Him as really and truly God—how shall we explain this?

If He had not told them who and what He was, if He had not been absolutely perfect, if He had not wrought great miracles before their eyes, we could not even have conceived it. Nay, more: had Jesus not eventually risen from the dead, the conclusion would have been inevitable that these twelve Galileans and their numerous disciples (who, after all, were people of remarkably good sense, as the ability of some of their writings testifies) must have been the victims of constant deception during the space of three whole years. But was misapprehension on such a point possible? It would have been an unprecedented state of things. That they were not easily deceived is clear from the difficulty with which they at first admitted Christ's Divinity, in spite of His unblemished sanctity, His asseverations, and His miracles. In fact, they did not feel absolutely certain until after the Resurrection. Since that event, nineteen centuries have adhered to their faith in the God-Man, a momentous fact which cannot fail to impress deeply even the most incredulous; and yet men can still be found, at the present day, to regard the preaching of the Divinity of Jesus as a personal offence to them. Is it then cause for wonder that there should have been unbelievers in the beginning? Even after the fact, of immense import, that the Church has overcome all obstacles now for nineteen centuries, we have still difficulty in accepting this Christian mystery with a full and entire faith. Even we who possess the truth are not always courageous enough to speak of our Lord's Divinity with all candour and fearlessness even before persons who have the same faith as ourselves,

and who would be shocked if we spoke in any other sense.

Who can explain how, from the very first, the Apostles were so ardent in their faith? So grand a faith in so abstruse a matter tells more powerfully in favour of Jesus than could the most obstinate incredulity tell against Him. The union of the Apostles and of the early Christians in their faith is more potent than the scandal of any divisions among them. The act of believing carries more weight with it than that of refusing belief. Truly, if Jesus had given the slightest sign of weakness in the presence of His Apostles; if they had not seen Him perform the miracles which the Gospels attribute to Him; if, above all, they had entertained the slightest suspicion that our Lord's Body had remained and was corrupting in the sepulchre, one cannot understand their bestirring themselves or embarking in His cause. It needed, on the contrary, a robust conviction to enable them to stand their ground against the torrent of opposition that threatened to engulf them. Profoundly convinced of His Godhead, and filled with confidence in His assistance, these fishermen did not hesitate to come forward as witnesses of a God crucified. They went forth to enter upon the struggle with the colossal power of Rome. They placed themselves in opposition to all that was most powerful and enlightened in their nation. They announced the Christ as the Son of God, as God Himself, as Jesus risen from the dead, both to sceptics and to those who were convinced that they were wrong. They were undeterred by the fact that, as the Jewish and Roman authorities had called their Master to account, they would do this far more easily in regard of them. No difficulty frightened them. Jesus had been conquered and suppressed, yet they dared to recommence His work in the very same place. They preached the Messiah openly in Jerusalem—"You have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine," said the High Priest, "and you have a mind to bring the blood of this man upon us" (Acts v. 28). They were no opportunists. They reproached the Jews openly for their Deicide, and they made a bad choice of the time for preaching this paradox. Many foreign Jews were at Jerusalem, the immense majority of whom were

against them, now especially that this fact seems to have justified the action of the Pharisees. Nothing was needed now but to mislead the people by a sophism. What had happened on the eve and on the day of the Passion was still fresh in the memory of all. But no matter! The courage of these men, lately so weak and timid, was only surpassed by their unvarying assurance of future success.

Peter took the initiative by addressing his co-religionists, and such was the power of the words of the fisherman, that he converted by one sermon three thousand souls, and by another five thousand. These converts, inspired with the apostolic zeal and fervour, carried the glad tidings far and wide into their native countries, thus preparing the soil for the subsequent sowing of the Word, as well as for the persecution of the sowers. Shortly after, the Apostles in turn departed, entering the synagogues of the towns they passed through. They spoke everywhere, in defiance of all opposition. Nothing disconcerted or discouraged them, and, humanly speaking, their faith was inexplicably firm. Such was their ardour that several times they were taken for lunatics. "Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad" (Acts xxvi. 24). "Have I not seen Christ Jesus our Lord? Am I not an Apostle? I am not ashamed of the Gospel," says Paul (1 Cor. ix. 1; Rom. i. 16). This bold and brave assurance manifests the firmness of their conviction of the Divinity of Christ their Master.

As M. le Hir says—"The princes of this world might arm themselves; they might bind the Apostles with chains, but nothing could terrify them; they declared that they could but speak the things which they had seen and heard." Had they been capable of fear, what plan of escape are they likely to have adopted? They would assuredly have said little either about the Cross or of Him who had been nailed upon it. They would have buried out of sight the hated name of Jesus, and of the instrument of punishment which had created such bitter enmity and derision against them. They might easily have claimed to be of the sect of Essenes, who adored the one invisible God, or of the believers in an impersonal Deity. No one would

have interfered with them, but then the world would not have been saved.[1]

The point to be insisted upon here is that the Apostles commenced their public career by proclaiming that the crucified Jesus was the God of heaven and earth. Unbelief was under obligation to prove the contrary, and this it found to be impossible. There may be much pleasure in dwelling on the uncertain points in history, but, at the same time, we cannot deny the real value of such testimony. It can easily be conceived that certain theorists are willing, when misled, to die in defence of their preconceived ideas or inherited prejudices. But are those persons deceived, and in what way, who, placing their hand on a narrative which they themselves have written, declare, "This is that which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, and our hands have handled, of the Word of God, and which we declare unto you"?[2] This proof, derived from the undeniable courage and conviction of the Apostles, has never failed to establish the truth of the Gospel whenever it has been assailed. It suffices by itself, and is impregnable. In the words of Henri Perreyve—"It alone holds its ground against the arguments of the subtlest wits, and disconcerts the reasonings that most bristle with sophisms."[3] It is the proof specially designed by God, and is therefore so plain that it cannot be misunderstood. To understand it is to adore.

Bossuet also develops this proof with his incomparable eloquence—"First let us admire the striking circumstances chosen by God for the formation of His Church. As He deferred, until the last moment, the fulfilment of the beginning of His promises, so He here develops their full accomplishment just at the moment when all hope seems to have disappeared. Abraham and Sarah were aged and barren when God announced that they should have a son. He waited for the decrepitude of old age, when they were bent with age and feebleness, before revealing His designs to them. He followed the same principle

[1] "Études bibliques," t. II., p. 246.
[2] 1 St. John i. 1.
[3] *Correspondant*, 1859.

in the foundation of His visible Church. He allows everything to depend upon hope—*Sperabamus.* 'We continued to hope,' said His disciples after His death. When God wishes to show that a work is entirely His own, He reduces everything first to impotence and despair, then He acts—*Sperabamus.* Our hope has come to an end! It has been blighted and buried with Him in the tomb. After the death of Jesus the disciples returned to their fishing; never had they ceased to hope as long as He was alive—*Sperabamus.* It was Peter who suggested it. 'Let us return to our capture of fish, and quit the fishing for men.' The foundation stone no longer supports the edifice; our Captain forsakes the field. Peter, 'the first Apostle,' takes up again his former occupation. What is to become of the Gospel? The capture of souls is at an end! But at that very moment Jesus appears; He revives the expiring faith of His downcast disciples. He bids them resume the ministry which He had confided to them, and summons them back to the care of His scattered sheep. This suffices to restore peace to their hearts, and to inspire them with indomitable courage. Reassured by His words, and fortified by His spirit, nothing can now surprise or trouble them. Neither their sense of weakness, nor their knowledge of the obstacles before them, nor the magnitude of the project, nor the lack of all human resources, can shake their high resolve to carry out their Master's wishes to the full. Strong in His promised help, far from hesitating, they gathered fresh strength from the very opposition which they encountered, and, in place of fear, they exhibited an indescribable joy in the midst of menaces and ill-treatment, with which the sole thought of the object before them had inspired them, so that, hoping against all hope, they felt sure of the revolution in men's minds which they desired to effect. How strange a transformation in those untrained intellects! how foolish the presumption, or how sublime and heavenly the inspiration, which has now taken possession of them!

"Consider for a moment the enterprise of these fishermen. Never has prince, or empire, or republic conceived so

lofty a plan. Without any apparent chance of human aid, these Galileans partitioned out the whole world for future conquest. They formed a determined plan to change the religion established all over the world, whether false or in part true—whether Jewish or Gentile. They desired to establish a new worship, a new sacrifice, a new law, because, said they, a certain Man whom men crucified at Jerusalem so ordained it. That Man is risen. He has ascended into heaven, where He is the Omnipotent One. No grace is given but by His hands, nor access to God granted save through His name. In His cross the glory of God is enshrined; in His death the salvation and life of men is found. But mark by what artifices they draw men's minds towards them. 'Come,' say they, 'and serve Jesus Christ, and if you give yourselves to Him you shall be happy after your death, but meanwhile you will have to suffer to the very last extremity.' That is their teaching, and those are their proofs. Such are the ends they propose, and such the means which they employ. In so strange an enterprise, without alluding to the success which they have actually obtained, I say their daring to hope for this success was a sure sign of truth. Nothing but the possession of the truth, or the appearance of that possession, can inspire men with hope. Whether a man be prudent or whether he be rash, if he is full of hope there is no middle course. Either truth will urge him on, or its appearance will delude him by flattery; either the force of the one convinces him, or the false security of the other deceives him. In the case before us all that has actually taken place astonishes us; the outlook seemed so different, and, from a human point of view, so impossible. And as there was no illusion in the case, the necessary conclusion to be drawn is that truth alone sustained the apostolic enterprise. Let the world laugh as it likes, yet it cannot be denied that the exercise of the strongest powers of persuasion ever known upon earth in the promotion of a cause that appears the most impossible, requiring the most intricate and difficult proofs, advocated by the most incredulous and timid of men, of whom even the boldest denied his Master, must have had some apparent cause. Imposture does not go so far; surprise is not so enduring: folly is not so well regulated.

"But let us finally pursue the argument of unbelievers and free-thinkers to its full extent. What is the opinion they would form of our holy fishermen? Is it that they invented a fable, and that they enjoyed giving it forth to the world? If so, surely they would have invented something much more plausible. Perhaps they were madmen or imbeciles, who did not know their own minds? And yet their lives, their writings, laws, and code of discipline, and, in fine, the results of all these prove the very opposite. It is a thing unheard of, either that fraud should be so poor of invention or that madness should be so happy in accomplishment. Neither did the design tell of trickery in its contrivers, nor its success betray the work of men who had no common sense. We have not here the victims of prejudice, ready to die for opinions imbibed with their mothers' milk. These were no mere restless theorists, who, after dreaming at home on the phantoms of their brain, or on fancies far removed from the evidence of the senses, make idols of their opinions and defend them with their last breath. They do not say—'We have thought, and have meditated, and have drawn such and such conclusions.' Their thoughts might have been false, their meditations valueless, the consequences they have drawn been defective and mistaken. But what they do say is—'We have seen, have heard, have touched with our hands, often and for long, and several of us together, this Jesus, risen from the dead.' If in this they speak the truth, what is there to say in reply? If they are fraudulent inventors, what has been their object? What advantage have they had in view? What reward, what recompense for all their labour? If they hoped to gain anything it must have been either here or hereafter. Neither the hatred, nor the power, nor the number of their enemies, nor their own weakness, gave them any chance of gain in this life. Nothing, therefore, was left but to hope for it in the next life. Now, either they looked to God for the happiness of their souls, or to man for the glory of an immortal name. If the former, it is clear they could not hope to receive it from a God of Truth by deceiving the world; and if the world chose to imagine that the

desire of being celebrated in history had taken possession of these uncultured minds even in their fishing boats, all I say is this—'Had a Peter, an Andrew, a John, amidst so much opposition and persecution, been able to foresee for so long a time the glory of Christianity and the honours we now pay to them, nothing more could be needed for convincing all reasonable minds that they were divinely appointed men, to whom the spirit of God and the ever invincible voice of truth made manifest in the extremity of oppression the victory assured to the good cause.'"[1]

What we affirm of the faith of the Apostles can be said of the faith of all Christians during the first century. The lively and explicit belief of the Apostles in the Divine Sonship of the Saviour radiated from their hearts and lips upon the faith, worship, and institutions of the first Christians. It was the pillar of fire which guided and illumined the primitive Church in its darkest hours of persecution. Such a faith was too ardent to be chilled either by raillery or by deeds of oppression. Its characteristics were such as cannot be otherwise explained than by the truth of the facts on which it depended. The more that the first Christians were surrounded by, and conformed to, the frivolity and folly of their age, the less possible would it have been for them to hope for success. Yet this faith has overcome the world.[2] To-day, wherever Christianity is accepted, everything in the life of a Christian which savours of peculiarity finds but little favour. Visionaries are always suspected of either insanity or fraud. Men may smile at them, but they pursue their way without experiencing a temptation to credulity. How much more strongly must this feeling have been developed in the first ages, when the preaching of the foolishness of the Cross was apt to be regarded as

[1] Panegyric on St. Andrew, preached at the Carmelites, Faubourg Saint Jacques, 30th Nov., 1668, before Turenne, who had made his abjuration of heresy, 28th Oct., 1668.

[2] A favourite sceptical argument relegates Christianity to the level of the pagan mythologies. Christ is no more a real, living, existent personality than Osiris. The Divinity of the former is on a par with that of the latter, and both equally belong to the region of myth, legend, and fable. The contemptible ignorance displayed in such reasoning suffices to prevent an intelligent student from wasting time in refuting it.

the stupidity of faith? The early Christians said that Jesus was God, but to the heathen He seemed not to care for them. The sceptics of St. Augustine's time were wont to address them in such words as these—*Ecce prædicatur ubique nomen Christi; quare abundant mala?*—"Behold the Name of Christ is preached everywhere, why then do evils still abound?" Yet in spite of everything, the early Christians remained firm in their convictions. Their testimony disposes of much trickery and ingenuity in argument, and supplies a sound and solid support for nineteenth century Christians to rest upon. It proves, at any rate, that the foundation of the faith cannot be attributed, with any show of fairness or justice, either to mental derangement, which could not possibly have prevailed among the whole mass of early Christians, or to a kind of fascination equally inconceivable among pagans.

IV.

A third fact which unbelief cannot account for, and which greatly vexes its soul, is the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, together with the striking sincerity and firmness of his faith. He had been much further removed from our Lord than the other Apostles. He had done much more than sin through weakness, like St. Peter, or by doubting along with Thomas. He had thrown his whole soul into the persecutions of the first Christians, until vanquished, in his turn, by the Voice of Jesus on the road to Damascus; he thenceforth devoted himself and his whole life to His service.

Paul was a Jew, born of Hebrew parents, of the tribe of Benjamin, in the town of Tarsus in Cilicia, where he acquired the rank of a Roman citizen. Being destined for the rabbinical office, he had studied in the school of Gamaliel, the descendant of Hillel. The strong faith which Paul derived from this school, combined with the ardour of his master in commenting upon the prophets, excited his naturally passionate temperament. Like Hillel, he aspired to witnessing the triumph of the law in all its primitive and inflexible rigour. The custom of the scribes

at this period was to undertake missions to distant places, for the purpose of gaining proselytes in view of the expected reign of the Messias (St. Matt. xxiii. 15). Saul undoubtedly belonged to this number. Being far distant from Jerusalem during the public ministry of Jesus, he had never beheld Him. By the time he returned to the Holy City, the disciples of Christ had already formed an imposing body. Saul perceived the impending danger. His zeal was awakened, and he resolved to unite with the more pious of his brethren in persecuting the disciples of the Prophet of Nazareth. Among the Solferim of the Great School there was no keener zealot. Having had no part in the Deicide, he longed to satisfy his hatred by vengeance upon the Apostles. His first victim was the chief of the deacons, Stephen. We find Saul seated in the tribune before which Stephen was arraigned, bearing witness against him, following him to the place of execution, and taking care of the garments of those who stoned the martyr till he died (Acts xxii. 20). Inflamed by the success of this sanguinary exploit, he fancied himself chosen by God for the extermination of the innovators (*Ibid.*, xxvi. 9-12). Paul then, whilst pious men were greatly afflicted at the death of the proto-martyr of the Gospel, set himself to ravage the Church, going into houses and dragging forth men and women to deliver them to the authorities for punishment (*Ibid.*, xxii. 4, 5). Those who were not hiding in their houses, and others who were vacillating and timid, might be found attending the synagogues. These he sought out, and in punishing them, compelled them to blaspheme, for there was nothing he felt could be severe enough to express his detestation of the name of Jesus (*Ibid.*, xxvi. 9-11). Jerusalem, after a time, did not supply a large enough field for his persecuting zeal; all the Christians were either in prison, or had concealed themselves, or had taken to flight. He therefore requested the High Priest to send him on an official mission to the synagogues at Damascus, in order that, should he perchance discover any members of the new "sect" there, he might bring them back in chains to Jerusalem (*Ibid.*, ix. 2). He departed "breathing out threatenings and slaughter" (Acts ix. 1). God, however,

waited for him on the way. Suddenly, as we are told in the Acts, a great light from heaven, more brilliant than the sun, surrounded the band of travellers, and struck all present with terror. Then a voice was heard saying—"Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" And he replied—"Who art Thou, Lord?" And the Lord said to him—"I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. It is hard for thee to kick against the goad." Then all-trembling, Saul inquired—"Lord, what wilt Thou have me do?" And the Lord said to him—"Arise, and go into the city, and there it shall be told thee what thou must do." But Paul's companions remained stupefied, for though they heard a voice they saw no one. Their chief arose, and stretching out his hands like a blind man, began to feel his way, for his eyes were covered with a film and he could no longer see. His companions led him into Damascus; passing the gate, they reached the street called Straight, and being directed to the house of a Jew named Judas, Saul remained there three days, fasting from food and drink, and stone blind. The Christians, who trembled at the sound of Saul's name, avoided this house. Paul remained in his retreat, praying and continuing his penitential fast, wondering why Jesus had thus struck him down on the road, and what duty He was about to lay on him.

Now, at Damascus there lived a disciple named Ananias, to whom the Saviour, in a vision, appeared, saying—"Ananias, arise and go to the street called Straight, and there, in the house of Judas, you will find a man called Saul of Tarsus, for behold he prayeth!" Ananias answered—"Lord, I have indeed heard many things of this man, and I know what harm he has done to the saints at Jerusalem. And he has now come here, armed with authority from the chief priests, to take all of us prisoners who dare to invoke Thy name." Jesus continued—"Go; for this man is an instrument whom I have chosen to carry My name to the Gentiles, to kings, and to the children of Israel. I will show him what great things he shall suffer for My name's sake." Ananias obeyed, and, having entered the house where Saul was, he imposed his hands upon him, saying—"My brother

Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to thee on the journey hither, has sent me to thee in order that thy sight may be restored to thee, and that thou mayest be filled with the Holy Ghost." And immediately the scales fell from his eyes, and he recovered his sight. Ananias said to him—"The God of our fathers has pre-ordained thee that thou shouldst know His will and see the Just One, and shouldst hear the voice from His mouth. For thou shalt be His witness to all men of those things which thou hast seen and heard. And now, why tarriest thou? Rise up and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, invoking His name" (Acts xxii. 14, *et seq.*). Saul, after some days, commenced to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God, to the astonishment of every one, and they asked—"Is not this he who in Jerusalem persecuted those that called upon this name, and came hither for that intent, that he might carry them bound to the chief priests?" But Saul "confounded the Jews, affirming that this is the Christ" (Acts ix. 21, 22).

The friend of Caiaphas, and minister of the bigotry of the Sanhedrim, became a martyr in the cause of that very idea which he had been most anxious to eradicate from the earth. Such an antithesis must surely prove much. That it may do this we must be assured that the change occurred in a mind at once intellectual and in full possession of itself, in a heart of deep and generous feeling, in a life sustained by a most sincere faith, and marked by a rare and uninterrupted unity of purpose, worthily enshrining its great central act of conversion. Such was precisely the case with Paul. His intelligence was exceptional, and he was possessed of the soundest common sense. The highest conceptions that one can have of God and Christ are those formed by St. Paul. His theology and his christology are alike admirable. In all his utterances the ideas are clear, logical, and explicit. Never do we detect any loss of balance between head and heart in his teaching. Notwithstanding the grandeur of the thought which he expresses, he shows the instinct of the true orator in always adapting himself to the capacity of his hearers, and in suiting his line of argument to their habits of thought. In this we have the

indication of a highly-cultivated and very penetrative mind. He understood well how to draw his illustrations from ordinary events, accidental circumstances, venerated traditions, or popular legends. In the company of savants he took part in philosophical controversies. At one time we find him quoting the verse of an ancient poet, at another he is dealing with the poor, the sick, or the young, always presenting the Christian faith to others under its most tender and consoling aspects. He drew the distinction between holiness and morality in his discourses, as may be seen by comparing those delivered at Athens with others given at Antioch, Pisidia, Derbe, and Lystra. In this we find him opening out wide and unknown horizons, extending over the destinies of pagan races, where he appeals to the consciences of his numerous auditors. Is there anything in literature more admirable than that fine apology delivered before Agrippa? Some may speak of him as an enthusiast; but, if by enthusiasm they mean the suspension of common sense, no man was ever less of an enthusiast than St. Paul. Wherever we travel with him in his most sublime writings, we never lose sight of the fact that we are in the company of a man who reasons, and knows whence he comes and whither he is going. He never appears like a fanatic, carried away by sentiment or fancy. Would that many men who argue and dispute did so with the brilliant logic and healthy, sound judgment exhibited by this converted Jew.

That he was no dupe is clear, neither did he seek to deceive. He spoke boldly, candidly, and to the point, regardless of consequences. "The Jews ask for signs," he said, "and the Greeks for philosophy, but as for us, we preach Christ crucified, a scandal to the Jews and folly to the Gentiles" (1 Cor. i. 22, 23). "I fought with beasts at Ephesus, but what will that profit me if the dead rise not?" (*Ibid.*, xv. 32). "I know whom I have believed, and I am certain that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day" (2 Tim. i. 12). "Who, then, shall separate us from the love of Christ?" (Rom. viii. 35-39). He does not do what is right for the sake of temporal reward or gratification;

he gives his reasons. He does not devote his life and energy to the service of a possibility, or a probability, or a perhaps. He is convinced that the dead will rise again.

Let us notice the Apostle's greatness of character. It is impossible to attribute imposture to such a soul, or to so generous a heart. He offers himself wholly to those whom he wishes to evangelise. He says to the faithful at Corinth that he loves them, and would live and die with them. He declares that he would be willing to be anathema, if that would open the eyes of his Jewish brethren to the truth of the Gospel. He writes to Philemon, in a letter of the most delicate feeling, begging him to take back his slave Onesimus. Speaking of Epaphroditus, a companion in arms sent to him by the Philippians whom he loved dearly—"He has been sick unto death, but God has had pity upon him, and not only upon him, but more upon me, so that I should not have sorrow upon sorrow." He does not write like one who lived eighteen centuries ago, but like a polished and considerate citizen of to-day. He speaks and feels as we do, or as we should do. "You are my joy and my crown," he writes to the Thessalonians, and he tells the Philippians that he carries them in his heart, and cherishes them with the gentleness of Christ Himself. When he was about to die a martyr's death, he did not say it was for their salvation, for that was the work of Christ, but he was willing to shed his blood to the last drop for their faith, if it would render it more acceptable to God. They were so dear to him, that he desired to give his life in proof of his love for them. We might multiply examples indefinitely, but this is unnecessary. The perusal of St. Paul's Epistles will satisfy us that St. Chrysostom was right when he declared that "the heart of Paul was like the heart of Christ."

The soul of our saint was not merely generous, it was admirable in its sincerity, as we cannot fail to see from the sufferings he so heroically endured with burning faith, for Christ's sake. Never has firmer or more intrepid faith been known than St. Paul's. "I speak," he says, "with sincerity in Christ, and God knows that I lie not." "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed

for ever, knows that I lie not." "The things which I write unto you I write before God, for I lie not." "I long to be dissolved and to be with Christ. For me to die is gain." Having told the Corinthians that at one time he had, as it were, a disgust of life, he continues—"But God hath taken hold of me and delivered me from such great dangers, and I hope that he will deliver me again from the perils that are to come." "If Jesus is not risen, then is our preaching vain and our faith is vain, then are we false witnesses for God." "I am an Apostle, not by man but by God. Have I not seen Jesus Christ?" Of his ante-conversion condition he says—"We also were fools." Speaking of Christians, he declares—"We are not like the children of unbelief, carried about by every wind of doctrine." A few words remain to us which were written by Paul when he prepared to lay his head upon the block. "The hour of my departure is at hand, I have finished my course, I have fought the good fight, I have kept the faith, and now the crown of justice is reserved for me; and the Lord, the just judge, will give it me in that day, and to all those who have loved His coming." The human conscience will ever declare that he who wrote such words as these was, at least, an honest man.

Nothing proves the sincerity of St. Paul more than the sufferings which he endured for Christ's sake. His whole life was a record of trials, hardships, and mortifications of every kind, as he so eloquently describes them in the eleventh chapter of his Second Epistle to the Corinthians. By them he bore testimony to Jesus, and cast at His feet the harvest of souls, never deeming them sufficient to pay off his debt to his Master. If further proof of this conviction were needed, it is furnished in his incessant travels, and in his struggles on behalf of the early foundations of the Church. In his three great missionary journeys, he traversed the world to gain it over to the Gospel. His apostolate supplies the most perfect model for the imitation of all the missionaries who have succeeded him. In his Epistle to the Romans he relates that "from Jerusalem round about as far as unto Illyricum, I have replenished the Gospel of Christ. And I have so preached this Gospel, not where Christ was named, lest

I should build upon another man's foundation" (Rom. xv. 19, 20). We know from the Epistle to the Galatians, and from the book of the Acts, how, after going into Arabia, he was taken from Damascus to Jerusalem, and presented to the Apostles by Barnabas. Thence he went to Antioch, Seleucia, Cyprus, Salamis, and Paphos, where he converted the consul Sergius Paulus. Pursued by persecutions, he was compelled to flee to the towns of Lycaonia, Lystra, Iconium, and Derbe, thence to Antioch and through Phœnicia and Samaria back to Jerusalem, where he gave an account to the Apostles of the results of his mission to the Gentiles (Acts xv.). We also learn from the same source how that, after separating from Barnabas, he passed through Syria and Cilicia, returning to Lystra and Iconium, traversing Phrygia, Galatia, and Mysia, he reached Troas, Philippi, and Macedonia; then went on to Lydia, Amphissa, Appollonia, Thessalonica, and Athens, where he pronounced his magnificent oration on the Unknown God. Thence he went to Corinth, and there stayed six months, and at length arrived at Ephesus, where he met the disciples who had received only John's baptism. Having again gone over these countries, he went on to Malta, and bidding farewell to the Church at Ephesus, returned to Jerusalem to be thence taken to Rome, the capital of the pagan world, where the Lord called him to bear witness as he had done in Jerusalem (Acts xxiii.).

If the intelligence of St. Paul be conceded, the heart and devotion he threw into his work, together with his powerful conviction of the truth of Christianity, form a very strong argument in its favour. It cannot be said of him that he was bound by his past career, for that was in direct hostility to the Gospel. His preaching of the Resurrection gave the lie direct to his whole life as a Pharisee. By his baptism in the name of Jesus he sacrificed all hopes of the riches and honour which his immense gifts and the influence which he had already acquired while still a young man would have ensured him among his people. How is it possible to question the sincerity of a man who, in preference to a splendid future career, chooses the life of a common labourer, working hard for his daily bread, and remaining ever

an object of scorn and dislike to his former admirers? During thirty years Paul exercised his ministry, working by night for his livelihood, and devoting each day to the winning of souls for Christ, until at last he was beheaded on the way from Rome to Ostia, near the spot now marked by the Tre Fontane.

For all that time he gave himself wholly to Jesus, after once beholding Him in the radiance of His glory, from which moment he became His apostle and servant—*Apostolus et servus.* "What an antithesis!" exclaims Bossuet. "We look in vain for any trace of the nervous fever that was supposed to account for the hallucination at Damascus. What right have we to presume there could have been in such a man a folly and a blindness of which we feel ourselves absolutely incapable?" This question was doubtless suggested by Paul's own friends, while his trials and the dangers which assailed him may well have re-echoed it in their own way. The privations, outrages, blows, and ever-present prospect of death, must have been a daily source of temptation to him to give up and return to an easier life. But he persevered, and why? It was because of the event on the road to Damascus—that dazzling light and the hearing of that Voice. Had it all been but an illusion, the victim of it was not without abundant opportunities of finding that out. On the contrary, however, the longer he lived the more deep-seated his conviction grew, and the more fervently he persevered, until the end. He knew in whom he believed, and how he learnt to believe. Before the crowd, and before Festus and Agrippa, at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of his career, always and everywhere, he recounted his marvellous history and the origin of his faith.

Has belief ever produced from man a renunciation so complete or devotedness so resolute, and withal so reasonable? For his faith Paul renounced the esteem of his compatriots; he broke with all the old prejudices of birth, tradition, and education, and trampled upon his strongest affections. For the love of his faith he embraced a new system of worship, with all the ardour of his fiery temperament. No sacrifice daunted him; he yielded up everything—thought, heart, and life itself

—for the sake of the truth. His faith seemed to spiritualise and raise him above human nature. He owed to it the manly boldness which makes itself felt, the enthusiasm which carries all along with it, and the charity which declared itself in his words seasoned with the salt of grace, and, lastly, his eloquence, always simple yet full of power. The Epistles of St. Paul are well calculated to fill incredulity with dismay, and no well-constituted mind can close itself against the impression which they have produced upon so many superior intellects. The sincerity and candour of this great Apostle, the deep-seated convictions which stirred him, and the nobleness of character which triumphed over such a succession of persecutions—all stand out there as in the light of day. We almost imagine we still see and hear him:

Et Pauli stare ingentem miraberis umbram !

Even Rénan was struck by the character of St. Paul. "Our modest incredulity would have enjoyed its revenge had that most dogmatic of men experienced his moment of scepticism. We should have preferred a second falling off of scales from his eyes. But that would be to carry conjecture too far."[1] Rénan wished to find a trace of scepticism in Paul; but failing to do this, he vindictively described him as "that ugly little Jew."

Baur has thus written in his last great work—"The conversion of Paul has always remained a problem to me. No psychological analysis, nor any dialectic can sufficiently explain the act by which God revealed His Son to him."[2] We desire nothing more than this. The study of the Epistles of St. Paul converted Lord Lyttelton in the last century. It was the word of the Apostle which changed the mind of that confirmed Deist. St. John Chrysostom acknowledged that no testimony could surpass in authority that of such a man as St, Paul. "If all the monuments of Christianity perished," wrote Bossuet, "and nothing remained but St. Paul's Epistles, they would suffice to attach me ardently to Christianity."

"That such a man as St. Paul allowed himself to be

[1] Rénan's "St. Paul."
[2] "Christianity and the Church of the First Three Centuries."

deceived, or wished to deceive others, regarding the nature of the religion which he transplanted from Jewish to pagan soil," exclaims M. Athanase Coquérel, a devout Protestant, "that a man of such genius, the author of the Epistles which we possess in the New Testament, mistook for facts old legends, revived to serve the necessities of the times; or that a man of his character should have sacrificed himself as he did to become either accomplice or dupe in so flagrant an imposture, must be regarded as a moral impossibility, in direct opposition to all we know of human nature, without precedent in the annals of humanity, and a thousand times more untrue and more incredible than the Gospel. No, man is not thus made, and one such as St. Paul is not a witness to whom we can refuse to listen. Let us not fear to say that in him the Apostle proves the apostolate, and his Epistles prove the individuality of their author; so that we must be pardoned when we say that if Paul is real, Christianity is real. If Paul was an Apostle, Jesus was the Messias. If Paul did in all truth plant, God as truly gave the increase."

But if Christianity be a mythology, the Gospel a bad assortment of popular legends, and Jesus only a moralist and philosopher—"the Socrates of Nazareth," as one has been pleased to call Him—we can no longer form any conception of St. Paul. We can think of him neither as a misguided enthusiast, since he had too much knowledge and mental penetration for that; nor as an impostor and deceiver, for he was too virtuous and devout. In a word, it is as impossible to reconcile us to the idea of a St. Paul in connection with a fabulous Christianity, as it is of a fabulous Christianity with one such as St. Paul. No alternative remains but that his Epistles are a reliable witness of the truth of the Gospels.[1] St. Paul is termed "The Apostle of the Gentiles." History calls him simply "The Apostle," for he had no equal in the apostolic college. He epitomised in his own person, in his life, and in his writings, the Evangelists, the doctors, and the Apostles of all time; because, to sum up, his evidence is decisive in proof of the presence of the supernatural in the origin of Christianity.

[1] "Answer to Dr. Strauss."

CHAPTER V.

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST.

"And I say to thee: That thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."—St. Matt. xvi. 18.

Ecclesia Dei vivi, columna et fundamentum veritatis.—"The Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."—St. Paul, 1 Tim. iii. 15.

Ideo victor quia victima!—"Therefore a victor because a victim. All the more victorious because persecuted."—St. Augustine, "Serm."

After all that has been established in the preceding chapters, we are forced to acknowledge that Jesus is truly God, and that His work is therefore supernatural. The logical consequence of this confession is the further admission that Jesus could not possibly have left His doctrine and the means of salvation which He brought to mankind, to run the risk common to all merely human works. He must necessarily have instituted some means whereby to guarantee the pure and integral transmission of His doctrine and the aids destined by Him to regenerate fallen humanity. God did not come down upon earth, bringing with Him only certain hypotheses. He did not come to bring to man truths which were to remain problems in his regard. Yet without a divinely assisted society, the Christian doctrine could only become a tissue of probabilities. *A priori* it is accepted; *a posteriori* it is verified. It is impossible to find out the faith among the different sects which profess Christianity; the very mention of their divisions precludes this. Hence it follows that if Protestantism were true, Christianity would be merely a human institution. No other Christian hypotheses can satisfy the demands of common sense. It is inconceivable that God should be, during sixteen centuries, indifferent to

the truth which He came down from heaven to bring to man, and that then He should suddenly bestir Himself to raise up restorers of His lost truth.[1] It is as inconceivable that He should have left Christians, for sixteen complete centuries, submerged in error and idolatry.[2] Whatever, therefore, weakens the action of the Church, weakens Christianity itself. The divinity of Christianity and the divinity of the Catholic Church are one and the same thing; and the argument which proves the divinity of the Catholic Church possesses already all the force of the argument for Christianity, before any particular proof is entered upon.

Our present object, then, is to treat the question of the only Church which can justly claim to trace its history back to Jesus Christ; the only Church which stands its ground against all the rest, since the others, without exception, forget their differences on the one common ground of hatred against the Catholic Church, and while they never exclude each other, they often fraternise; the only Church, in fine, which claims, absolutely, the highest of all privileges, that of pronouncing with infallibility, and in the Name of God. This proof is so unanswerable as a first principle that, if an intelligent Catholic has any doubt at all about the third, he doubts everything. He can never dream of entering into any Christian system whatever. We no longer live in the age of the great heresiarchs. One heresy alone, or rather a negation, namely *scepticism*, reaps, nowadays, the benefit of the defection of every one who abandons the Catholic Church.

"But," it will be asked, "where is the Church?" In the midst of the numerous conflicting sects which all claim for themselves the promises of Christ, by what signs are we to recognise the true Church? Has Jesus Christ instituted a religious society, teaching and legislative, to preserve, to explain, and to uphold His doctrine?

[1] Most of the sectarians who have arisen since the sixteenth century maintain that, the original Christianity of Christ and His Apostles having disappeared, it became necessary for them to rehabilitate it. No two of them, however, agree as to what Christianity originally was.

[2] "The Book of Homilies" of the Anglican Church states that the "whole world was drowned in damnable idolatry for eight hundred years and more" before the Reformation!

If so, what constitution, what mission, what prerogatives, what means of action has He given to it? Grave questions these, which must receive an immediate answer. It is impossible that Jesus could have left such interests in suspense.

I.

In the first place, Christianity was established by its Founder as a Society.

Individualism is not in conformity with the mind of Jesus Christ; it has no place in authentic history. If we go back to the very commencement of the Church, we find no trace of this modern form of Christianity. Jesus Christ instituted a teaching authority in His Church. It is true, He did not separate Himself from either the religious or the political society of His nation. "Do not think I am come to destroy the law or the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil" (Matt. v. 17). Nevertheless, He came to found a new society, different, in many respects, from the ancient one. Jesus having announced that the temple would be destroyed, so that there would not remain a stone upon a stone (Matt. xxiv. 2), clearly proclaimed the end of the Mosaic dispensation. The society which He founded was to be small in its commencement, but its development was to be of wide extent. It was "the grain of mustard seed, which is the least indeed of all seeds; but when it is grown up, it is greater than all herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and dwell in the branches thereof" (Matt. xiii. 32). The apostolic preaching addressed itself to all nations alike. "Many shall come from the East and from the West, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven; but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into the exterior darkness" (Matt. viii. 11). "Go ye therefore into the highways; and as many as ye shall find, call to the marriage" (Matt. xxii. 9). His Apostles were to found this society: "You shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you, and you shall be witnesses unto Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the uttermost part of the

earth" (Acts i. 8). "Amen, I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind upon earth, shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven" (Matt. xviii. 18). "As my Father hath sent Me, I also send you" (John xx. 21). "All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth. Going, therefore, teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world" (Matt. xxviii. 18-20). "Go ye into the whole world, and preach the Gospel to every creature" (Mark xvi. 15). "I have chosen you, and have appointed you that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain" (John xv. 16).

He identifies His Divine authority with their authority by saying—"He that heareth you, heareth Me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me" (Luke x. 16). He punishes with an anathema all contempt of this authority —"If he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican" (Matt. xviii. 17). Lastly, on the eve of His death, He offers up this prayer—"That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in Thee . . . that they may be made perfect in one" (John xvii. 21-23). "Other sheep I have, that are not of this fold: them also must I bring, and they shall hear My voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd" (John x. 16). In a word, this Church was to be "a city seated on a mountain" (Matt. v. 14), visible to all and accessible to all. It is a society undivided in its universality, which cannot be said of various communities separate from and independent of one another.[1]

That the Church was founded as a society can be further proved by the text of the apostolic writings.

St. Paul everywhere speaks of the Church as an united

[1] This description of the Church excludes the novel teaching of those Anglicans who hold that the Church is no longer visibly one, but that its unity is, nevertheless, existing though it is invisible. Exteriorly the Church is divided into three separate branches—Roman, Greek, and Anglican. It is needless to say that neither the Catholic Church nor the Greek Communions hold any such teaching, which is, on the face of it, heretical and false.

society. For him, the Church is "the body of Christ"; it is a society of souls united by the bonds of faith and charity. "The Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. iii. 15). We cannot understand these words in the sense of a material Church, of an ideal or chimerical Church, but we can comprehend them perfectly in the sense of a real society. To express this idea of the unity of the Church, and the union of its divers parts in Jesus Christ, the Apostles in their Epistles represent it as forming a body of which Jesus Christ is the Head, and the faithful, including its ministers, who, with their several functions, compose its hierarchy, are the members (1 Cor. xii. 27); the various nations together form its corporate parts (Eph. iii. 6); and the whole makes up a society (1 John i. 7), bound together under "one Lord, one faith, and one baptism" (Eph. iv. 4, 5); in "constant mutual charity amongst yourselves" (1 Peter iv. 8). This Church is also represented as the spouse of Christ, whom He has loved, and purchased with His blood. She is the bride, the spouse of the Lamb, the heavenly Jerusalem, in the light of which City all nations shall walk (Apoc. xxi. 9, 10, 23). These figures reveal the idea which the Apostles, conformably to the teaching of Jesus Christ, had conceived of the Church, One and Universal, composed of particular Churches all bound to maintain peace and unity among themselves as one body.

The existence of the Church as a society is further proved by the evidence of the apostolic Fathers. St. Irenæus will tell you that "we must obey the bishops of the Church, men who trace their succession from the Apostles themselves, and who, with their right of succession in the episcopate, have received also the certain gift of divine truth."[1] Clement of Alexandria says—"The Church is the royal road, the straight highway which can safely be followed without peril of once losing ourselves therein."[2] St. Cyprian says—"He who has not the Church for his mother, can never have God for his Father."[3] St. Cyril of Jerusalem says—"The Church teaches, universally and

[1] "Contra hæres.," vol. vii., Chap. xv.
[2] "Stromata," vol. vii., Chap. xv.
[3] "Of the Unity of the Church," vi.

without defect, all the dogmas, the knowledge of which is necessary to mankind."[1] St. Epiphanius says—"The Church of God is the royal road, the way of truth, which we must follow if we would not lose ourselves in the by-paths of error."[2] St. Jerome says with St. Paul—"The Church of the living God is the hand of the Lord, the pillar and the ground of truth."[3] St. Augustine says—"The authority of the Church has been divinely constituted, in order that we may support ourselves firmly by it, and so raise ourselves up to God."[4]

Thus the unanimous voice of all ages proclaims the existence of the Church as a society from the very first, indicating also her right to the submission of all minds and wills, in the order of faith and salvation.

II.

It is, then, proved that Jesus Christ founded a society to carry on His work of redemption. This society, which, once founded, ought to exist still, is the Catholic Church. The fundamental proof of Catholicism, that which constitutes it the true form of Christianity, is its Apostolicity. Let us see, then, whether the Catholic Church ascends historically to Jesus Christ; for if she, indeed, thus reaches to Him, it is clear that she possesses His promises, and that we are right in opposing the "Reformers" and all other Christian sects.

It is difficult to establish, with critical exactness, step by step, the *Apostolicity of the Church* by tracing its history back to the time of Jesus Christ. The most convincing proof of the apostolicity of the Catholic Church is the fact that she has never separated herself from any Christian body more ancient than herself. This argument, although negative, carries great force with it in favour of the authenticity of Catholicism. Ever since the time of Jesus Christ we have lived through the successive ages of history. If the Catholic Church had cut herself off from another society, more powerful or more ancient than herself,

[1] "Catechism," xviii.
[2] "Hæreses," vol. ix., 13.
[3] Commentary on the second chapter of Aggeus.
[4] "De utilitate credendi," ix. 17.

we should have known it. As Bossuet says—"The part where the rupture took place would be always bleeding." Is it not well known that the Christian sects have separated themselves from us? The Greeks and the Protestants may say, if they will, that they did right in so separating. That is not the question. Are they, or are they not, separated from Catholicism? St. Cyprian answered well the heretics of his time—"It was not we who separated from them; it was they who went out from us."[1] We justly apply his words to all the Christian sects outside Catholicism.

Although our separated brethren reproach us with having introduced "innovations," with having "added superstitions" to our theology, we do not intend to answer such accusations here. But we would put these questions to them—"Did the Catholic Church come into existence without any one perceiving it? Did she spring out of the earth, if we may use the comparison, like a mushroom after a rainy day? That her beginning cannot be traced, is a proof that she began with Jesus Christ. There is no need of examining our annals to prove this point. The simplest member of the Church perceives the force of this proof, and feels that it is amply sufficient for him. Christianity is nineteen hundred years old. For how many centuries have the Greeks existed, the Lutherans, the Calvinists, or the Anglicans? For twelve centuries and for three. This settles the question. Another significant fact is that, while the Protestant sects and the Oriental schisms bear the name of some man, or of some country, the Catholic Church alone calls herself the Church of Jesus Christ. The very origin, therefore, of the dissentient communities bears witness against them, and they find their condemnation in their own cradle.[2]

The *Apostolicity of the Roman See* can no more be contested than that of the Catholic Church. The list of Roman pontiffs still exists, and this papal genealogy is one of the most authentic extant in history.[3] Our adversaries content themselves with saying that the Popes were pro-

[1] "Non nos ab illis, sed illi a nobis recesserunt."—"De unitate Ecclesiæ."

[2] See "Les origines chrétiennes" (Lessons in Ecclesiastical History given at L'Ecole Superieure of Theology, Paris, by the Abbé Duchesne).

[3] "The Liber Pontificalis" of the Abbé Duchesne demonstrates, in an unanswerable manner, the historic succession of the Papacy.

found politicians, who increased their power day by day, until at length Gregory VII. aimed at becoming the Sovereign of sovereigns, a sort of god upon earth. They attack "the encroaching spirit of the Papacy," but do not deny that the list of Popes, from Peter downwards, is an absolutely authentic list. Its correctness cannot be questioned up to the time of St. Irenæus, who gives the names of all the Popes anterior to his own time. "After St. Peter came Linus, Cletus, Anacletus, Clement, Evaristus, Alexander, Xystus, Telesphorus, Hyginus, Pius, Anicetus, Soter, Eleutherius, Victor, Zephyrinus."[1] St. Epiphanius, St. Optatus, and St. Augustine enumerate in their writings the Bishops of Rome after St. Peter, just as St. Irenæus had done before them, giving their reasons for this. "In order," writes St. Epiphanius, "that thereby the certain and exact truth may be demonstrated."[2] And St. Optatus says—"In order that the heretics, not being able to show the origin of their sees, show instead that their party is but an erratic branch, springing from the detached stump of falsehood, not from the original trunk of truth."[3] St. Augustine says—"One of the great motives which keep me faithful to the Catholic Church is the succession of Bishops in this chair of Peter, to whom the Lord committed, after His Resurrection, the feeding of His sheep."[4] With the Fathers of the first centuries, then, apostolicity was an essential property of the true Church. The See of Rome has always existed. In proving this, the apostolicity of the Catholic Church is proved along with it, for it has always been understood that, to be a Catholic, one must be absolutely in communion with the See of Rome.

The *Apostolicity of doctrine* in the Church is as indisputable a fact. What is quite certain is that, from the first century, the Church was almost exactly what she is to-day. Where has the Church erred? In what has she innovated? Protestants try to answer this question, but without success. The whole of Catholicism may be found in the Catacombs! Inscriptions repeat the teachings of art, and whether in the

[1] "Adv. haeres.," Book I., Chap. iii., p. 175.
[2] "Panarium," xxvii. 6.
[3] "Schisma. Donat.," Book II., p. 34.
[4] "Fundamenti," iv. 5.

subterranean galleries, or in the admirable epigraphic museum of the Lateran, their witness appeals to the eye at every step. The most independent spirits have testified to this; in our own day, Louis le Blanc[1] and Paul Allard[2] both prove it decisively. M. Aube, himself a rationalist, admits it. The doctrines proclaimed by the inscriptions in the formulas of the second and third centuries are—the cultus of the Blessed Virgin; the primacy of St. Peter; the sacrifice of the Mass; prayer for the dead; faith in the intercession of saints, and in the invocation of angels; the veneration of relics and images; the adoration of the Cross. Mention is also made of the Episcopate, which, according to certain of the texts, certainly originated in the first century.[3] Protestants deny the authenticity of the seven Epistles of St. Ignatius of Antioch, only because the existence of the Episcopacy is to be clearly traced therein, after the same form in which it now exists in the Catholic Church. St. John also proclaims the dogma of the Invocation of Saints. From the date of the martyrdom of St. Ignatius relics were carried in triumphal procession through the Christian Catacombs of Rome and Antioch. Were the early martyrs then idolators, and was the whole Church committed to idolatry during the first four centuries? You refuse the title of Saint to Irenæus, to Athanasius, Ambrose, Jerome, or Augustine; does this mean that they did not understand the nature of true Christianity? These so-called Protestant objections were well known to the great Christian doctors, who refuted them with a careful precision which we may well envy. Or was it possible that they mingled cockle with the good grain, and corrupted the doctrine for which the martyrs shed their blood? Pass along the whole chain of tradition and you will find the Church ever practising the maxim of Pope Stephen in the third century—*Nihil innovetur, nisi quod traditum est*—"Let there be no innovations; let tradition be followed." This answered to the *depositum custodi* of St. Paul.

Whoever studies the Fathers conscientiously and without

[1] "Monuments of Christian Epigraphy."

[2] "Roma Sotteranea."

[3] See "Les origines de l'episcopat" (Lessons in Ecclesiastical History, by the Abbé Duchesne, Book I., Chap. vi.).

prejudice, will be convinced, along with Gibbon, that "no well-informed man can gainsay the historical fact that all through the first four centuries of the Church, Catholic principles were already recognised, both in theory and in practice.[1]

We can truly repeat the acknowledgment of the Calvinists, in a document written in 1775—"If Irenæus, if Gregory, Cyril, Athanasius, Augustine, and Jerome could return to-day to this world, they would find the original society of which they were members existing only in the Catholic Church."[2] To save itself Protestantism was obliged to write history after its own fashion. Luther and his adherents pretended that they left the Church in order to return to the doctrine and practice of the first four centuries, whereas historical research has clearly and distinctly proved the continuity of the Church. "The dogmas and practices," says M. Paul Allard, "in which the Reformers of the sixteenth century imagined that they found novelty and innovation, such as the holy sacrifice of the Mass; the real presence of the Saviour in the Eucharist; the primacy of St. Peter; the invocation of the Saints, especially of the Blessed Virgin; and, finally, that admirable exchange of the relations between the living and the dead—all this is as clearly taught in the Catacombs as it is in the catechism; consequently, it is as old as the Church herself, flowing directly from the teaching of the Apostles, nay, even from that of Jesus Christ. Such is the testimony readily borne by Christian art when interrogated, and it would have been still more definite and complete if we had taken, at the same time, the depositions of the authority above referred to, epigraphy, and after the frescoes, had passed on to examine the inscriptions.[3] The Catholic Church, therefore, with all its present distinctive features, has existed from the time of the Apostles. M. Rénan admitted that it was so. He insisted on his own private

[1] "Memoirs," vol. vi., Chap. i.

[2] "Memorial presented to Louis XV., by the Evangelical Churches of France."

[3] "Les peintures des catacombes." It should be borne in mind that certain beliefs and practices, which are condemned by some of the numerous sections into which Protestantism is divided, are not peculiar to the Catholic and the Oriental Churches, but are of greater antiquity still, being of Jewish origin. Such are prayers for the dead, invocation of saints, etc.

objections to the Christian faith, and yielded himself up to their influence, but he took good care not to adopt or acknowledge any form of Christianity in Protestantism. He saw clearly that true Christianity is that of all the ages taken together. Every intelligent Protestant must agree with Cardinal Newman that "the Church which to-day calls herself Catholic is, by heredity, by organisation, by her principles, by her position, and by her exterior relations, the very same constitution known by the title of Catholic from ancient times. Whether her teaching has become corrupted may be a matter of opinion, but her perpetuity is a fact. We are infinitely safer in believing that she occupies the place of the ancient Church, than that certain of her doctrines are innovations." The Protestant naturalist, Schérer, holds that "Catholicism was born the same day as the Gospel, grew up in the same cradle, developed side by side with it, and shares in its conquests."[1]

The Catholic Church alone dates from the coming of Jesus Christ. She received her charter, as well as her form, from His Divine lips. She alone has subsisted uninterruptedly from that date onward; she possesses still all the characteristics bestowed upon her by her Founder. "Suffice it to say," remarks Bossuet, "that if the Church had even once been detected in the fault of so much as a moment's interruption, the memory thereof would never have been effaced from the minds of men; and the Catholic Church, or, if you prefer it, the 'Roman Church,' would henceforth have worn upon her forehead the date of such novelty or schism, instead of bearing, as she does, the immemorial testimony of an invariable and perpetual succession."[2] "How great a consolation it is for the children of God," he says elsewhere, "and how secure a possession of the truth, to feel certain that from Innocent XI. we have an uninterrupted view as far back as to St. Peter himself, who was constituted by Jesus Christ Prince of the Apostles; whence, if we include the Pontiffs who served under the Old Law, we ascend to Aaron and Moses, to the patriarchs, and to the very beginning of the world! How far-reaching is this succession, this tradition; what a marvellous line of continuity! If our

[1] "Mélanges," p. 31.
[2] "Second Pastoral Instruction."

mind, uncertain in its nature, and through its incertitude become the sport of its own reasonings, has need in questions concerning salvation of being fixed and bound down by some decisive authority, what greater authority can it desire than the Catholic Church, which unites within itself all the authority of past ages, and of the most ancient traditions of the human race up to its very origin?"[1] Yet more—"You have the consolation of being associated with a Church which can never be reproached with recentness of origin, a Church which, whatever else may be said against her, has no enemy who will deny that, from the time of the Apostles down to our own days, she has uninterruptedly acknowledged the adorable Trinity, the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, Redemption through His Blood, together with the mysteries of the Gospel, and the foundations of Christianity. Can sectarians, in the novelty of their position, claim any share in this venerable antiquity, this confidence lasting throughout so many ages, this majesty of the Church? Who are they? Whence came they? To whom have they succeeded? And where was the Church of God when they suddenly sprang into existence in the world? We say to them, 'Endeavour not to shelter yourselves within the treacherous asylum of an invisible Church, but strive to regain the security of the ancient Christian fold. Study carefully historians and holy doctors; point out any Church, recognised as truly Christian, which has during the course of Christianity from the beginning established itself by an act of separation from the one Church. If, on the contrary, orthodoxy has never followed this plan, and yet every heresy has, in turn, adopted it; then, if it be that you yourselves have made choice of it, consider well those whom you most resemble, and be warned against the fate of those whose evil example you are copying.'"[2]

III.

The Church of Jesus Christ, founded by Him as a society, and traceable from the present time up to that

[1] "Discourse on Universal History," 2nd part, Chap. xxxi.
[2] "Refutation of the Catechism of Paul Ferry," conclusion.

foundation, ought to present the character of *Unity*. Unity is the first mark of the Church given in the Creed. *Credo in unam Ecclesiam*—"I believe in one Church."

She must possess, in the first place, Unity of government. Jesus Christ instituted in His Church a supreme authority which all are bound to obey in matters concerning faith and morals. And, in order that this unity might be more distinctly visible, He ordained that the Church's supreme authority should reside in one individual alone, the successor of Peter, who should concentrate in himself the whole of its authoritative teaching. In the Gospels and in the Acts, St. Peter always directs as chief. In every page of the sacred history where he appears he holds the prominent position. In one place he speaks in the name of all the disciples (Matt. xix. 27; Luke xii. 41); in another he alone answers when all are questioned in common (Matt. xvi. 16). Sometimes Jesus addresses Himself to Peter, as to a principal person even among the privileged disciples (Matt. xxvi. 40; Luke xxii. 31). After the Ascension Peter comes before us as the organ of the Apostolic College (Acts i. 15; ii. 14; v. 8, 29). Jesus lodges with Peter, and teaches from his boat (Luke v. 1-11). Peter's house was the centre of the apostolic preaching. He was regarded as the chief of the band, and it was to him that the tax-gatherers addressed themselves for the payment of the impost due from the community. Simon was the first to acknowledge Jesus as the Messias (Matt. xvi. 16, 17), and Jesus gave him the Syriac surname of Kepha—"Rock"—wishing thereby to signify that He made him the corner-stone of the building (Matt. xvi. 18). In fact, the text would be simply inexplicable were Peter of no more importance than the others, as M. Rénan himself fully acknowledges. These different events, whether taken singly or collectively, form an immovable basis on which the primacy of Peter and his successors rests. "Peter," says Bossuet, "appears as the first in all circumstances; the first to confirm the faith of the brethren; the first in the obligation of exercising love; the first of all the Apostles to see the Risen Saviour, as he was to be the first witness thereto before the

people; the first, when there was question of filling up the number of the Apostles; the first to confirm the faith by miracle; the first to convert the Jews; the first to receive the Gentiles; the first to speak in the Council of Jerusalem; the first whom Paul went to see before entering upon his apostolic functions. And Paul did this, that it might be for ever an established precedent that no one, be he ever so wise or so holy, nay, be he another St. Paul, should omit to visit St. Peter."

But Protestants and Eastern schismatics declare "the question involved here is only one of a primacy of honour. Besides, these texts, however strongly they tell for Peter, prove nothing for his successors." We reply at once with the question: Why then was there a primacy of honour at all if it was to serve no purpose? We can well, indeed, understand there being a primacy of honour, provided it were to be of practical use. But the adversaries of the Church insist that nothing of the kind was intended, and that the primacy of St. Peter was to be one of honour alone. The words of Jesus Christ prove, on the contrary, that it was a real primacy of jurisdiction which He conferred upon St. Peter—that He designed him to be the foundation of His Church, the centre in which all should be united, the visible head whom all were bound to obey—"Thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven" (Matt. xvi. 18, 19).

Wherefore M. Rénan says, in regard to this passage—"At one moment Jesus seems even to promise Peter the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and to give him the right to pronounce upon earth decisions to be in every case ratified in heaven."[1] *I will give to thee:* is this to promise, or simply to seem to promise? If the latter, what then does make a true form of affirmation?

And yet, a little after, M. Rénan ventures on this avowal—"Simon Bar-jona is marked out amongst his

[1] "Vie de Jésus," p. 15.

equals by a position of very especial importance." As a matter of fact, to imagine that Jesus Christ made use of such language, with such distinct solemnity, and yet had no intention of confiding anything particular to St. Peter, is to admit (which God forbid) that He cast forth on the air certain high-sounding words without any meaning. It must be remembered, likewise, that it was not on this occasion that Jesus first gave to His Apostle the name of Peter; and it is to be remarked that, later on, He gave to all the Apostles certain powers which, at that moment, He gave to Peter alone. Thus, according to St. Ambrose—"Where Peter is, there is the Church, since the edifice is where the foundation is." The Apostles, it is true, are also called the "foundation" of the Church[1] (Eph. ii. 20), but, in a collective sense, Peter is this individually. It is to Peter, then, that all must look both for the doctrine which they are to profess, and for the discipline according to which they should live. Before entering the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus said to Peter—"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and thou, being once converted, confirm thy brethren" (Luke xxii. 31, 32). He then promises him indefectibility in the faith. Finally, after His Resurrection, Jesus confers on Peter the primacy, not only over the flock, but also over the chiefs of the flock—"Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me more than these? . . . Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee. . . . Feed My lambs. . . . Feed My sheep" (John xxi. 15-17).[2] It is impossible to maintain that the primacy thus bestowed upon Peter was the result of fortuitous circumstances. It, on the contrary, expresses a very definite intention.

[1] The words *Tu es Petrus* form the immovable foundation of the supremacy of the See of Peter. Any other interpretation of this passage than the Roman will not bear the light of examination.

[2] It is important for the student to observe the distinction between the two Greek words used by St. John in describing this threefold commission. The second of these, ποίμαινε, signifies "rule" or "govern," as it is elsewhere translated in English versions of the New Testament, where the word occurs, *e.g.*, "He shall *rule* them with a rod of iron." The correct rendering of St. John xxi. 15-17 would be "Feed (βόσκε) My lambs. . . . Rule over (ποίμαινε) My sheep. . . . Feed (βόσκε) My sheep."

The text of the Acts and of the apostolic writings leaves no room for doubt that it was the evident intention of the Saviour to constitute in His Church both a hierarchy and a primacy as the leading authority. Other passages of Holy Scripture may be adduced in confirmation of this infallible authority in the Church governed by Peter. "If any one will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican" (Matt. xviii. 17). Jesus Christ willed His Church to be "without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. v. 27). This Divine assistance involves consequences so grave that salvation or damnation follow upon the acceptance or wilful rejection of the doctrine of the Apostles—"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned" (Mark xvi. 16). "He that heareth you heareth Me, and he that despiseth you despiseth Me." As for those who would prefer a different mode of action, some striking exercise of power to show forth, in all its majesty, the spiritual rule of the chief of the Apostles, they demand an impossibility. "How could one wish to see Peter, surrounded as he was by brother Apostles, all equally inspired to preach the Gospel, and holding from Jesus Christ Himself universal jurisdiction, command imperiously, as Gregory VII. was obliged to do in the midst of the corrupt and simonaical episcopate of the eleventh century?"[1]

The texts which prove Peter's privileges, prove them equally for his successors.[2] If we consult the pages of the most ancient Fathers, we shall have the consolation of finding that our sentiments are exactly the same as those held by the great men who lived so near in time to the foundation of Christianity. We can adopt their very words without changing a syllable. As witnesses of the first ages of faith, they were ordained by God to note and

[1] Gorini, "Defence of the Church," t. II., p. 42.

[2] Those who desire to study the question of the Petrine and Papal prerogatives cannot do better than consult the following treatises:—"St. Peter, Bishop of Rome," by the Rev. T. Livius, C.S.S.R.; "The See of St. Peter," "St. Peter: His Name and Office," and "The Throne of the Fisherman," all by T. W. Allies; "Petri Privilegium," by Cardinal Manning; "Authority," by Rev. L. Rivington, etc.

hand on, in all its integrity, the teaching of Christ and of His Apostles. St Ignatius of Antioch terms the Roman Church προκαθῆμενη τῆς ἀγάπης—"The president of the fraternity." St. Irenæus attributes to the Church of Rome a superior dignity, *potentior principalitas*, flowing from its foundation by the Apostles Peter and Paul. "The testimony of Irenæus," says Friedrich, in his "History of the Church of Germany," "is the crux of Protestants." "In fact," writes M. l'Abbé de Broglie, "how could St. Irenæus, brought up in the East, have admitted without difficulty, and set forth with such precision, this primacy of Rome, if he had not known and acknowledged it from his infancy, and if St. Polycarp, the disciple of John, had not himself taught it to him? Any other supposition seems to us impossible to admit. The personal interest that St. Irenæus took in the Roman See raises his testimony, in our eyes, above all suspicion." According to Tertullian, the Bishop of Rome is "the Bishop of bishops."[1] St. Cyprian calls Rome "the Mistress of the Churches, whence flows the unity of the priesthood."[2] "To make the Church's unity visible," he says, "the Lord Himself willed that this unity should be centred in one man as its source."[3] St. Jerome thus writes—"One of the twelve was chosen that, by the establishment of a head, all occasion of schism might be taken away."[4] Again—"I am in communion with the chair of Rome because I wish to follow Jesus Christ."[5] St. Gregory Nazianzen speaks of the city of Rome as "the principal city of all Catholicity"—πρόεδρος τῶν ὅλων. St. Ambrose teaches that "from Rome flows to all other Churches the right of legitimate communion."[6] "Communion with Rome," says St. Ambrose again, "is the proof that we are in Catholic unity."[7] "In Rome has always resided the principality of the Apostolic See," says St Augustine.[8] St. Optatus asserts—"You cannot deny that St. Peter, the chief

[1] "De pudicit," Chap. i.
[2] "Ecclesia principalis unde unitas sacerdotalis orta est."—Ep. XII. 14.
[3] "De unit. Eccl."
[4] "Ad Jovin.," Book I.
[5] Ep. XV., "Ad Damas."
[6] "De vita sua," app. II., p. 57.
[7] "De obit. frat. satyr.," No. 47.
[8] Ep. XLIII.

of the Apostles, founded an episcopal chair at Rome. This See is one, in order that the others, by preserving unity with it, may be themselves united to one another; and, consequently, whoever sets up a see in opposition to this one, is a schismatic and a transgressor."[1] Let us hear St. John Chrysostom—"Jesus Christ confided to Peter the government of the Church throughout the world." "Peter is the Prince of the apostolic choir, the mouthpiece of the disciples, the foundation of the confession of faith, and the fisherman of the whole universe."[2] We have no need to cite the testimony of later Fathers, as their agreement with this thesis has never been contested.

History describes the Bishops of Rome as exercising, from the very first and along the course of all the centuries, an undisputed Supremacy. St. Clement interposed at Corinth for the correction of abuses; St. Victor, in Asia Minor, on the question of observing Easter; St. Stephen, in Africa, concerning the re-baptism of heretics. The historian, Socrates, makes Pope Julius I. thus address the bishops assembled at Antioch:—"The ecclesiastical canons forbid the promulgation of any decree to the Churches, without the consent of the Bishop of Rome."[3] Pope Felix III. formally declares that "the Lord, speaking to the blessed chief of the Apostles, said, *Tu es Petrus*. Obeying this voice, the three hundred and eighteen Fathers of Nicea submitted to the Holy Roman Church the confirmation of that which had been done, and of their own ratification of it."[4]

As soon as the persecution had ceased, this supremacy of the Bishop of Rome shone out in its full glory. He was consulted on all questions; he promulgated laws and decrees which were of universal obligation. The Popes convoked and presided over councils. Six hundred and thirty bishops greeted the letter of St. Leo the Great on the "Incarnation" with these words—"Peter has spoken by the mouth of Leo."[5] "To be Roman is to be Catholic," cried the African bishops when exiled to Sardinia, in a

[1] "Adv. Donat.," II. 2, 3.
[2] Homily on "Penance" and on "The Ten Thousand Talents."
[3] "Histoire ecclésiastique," vol. ii., Chap. xvii.
[4] Labbe, vol. iv., col. 182.
[5] *Petrus per Leonem locutus est.*

letter to John and Venesius. The Fathers of the Council of Nicea put into practice what they proclaimed in theory. Baronius proves that this Council submitted its decrees to St. Sylvester;[1] and Dr. Héfelé has strengthened the argument of Baronius by several observations.[2] The Popes deposed unworthy bishops, condemned heresies, and pronounced final judgment in all ecclesiastical matters. "The Pope is everywhere," says J. de Maistre; "he comes in everywhere, he sees all round everything, just as he himself is looked to on every side."[3] "If any one shall assert," says the Vatican Council, "that it is not by the institution of Jesus Christ, or by Divine right, that the Blessed Peter hath a line of successors in his primacy over the whole Church, or shall say that the Roman Pontiff is not the successor of Blessed Peter in the same primacy, let him be anathema!"[4]

"I will rise up before the tribunal of Jesus Christ," exclaimed the Abbé Mermillod, "and I will say to the Redeemer, 'Lord, if the primacy of Peter is an imposture, then You are the guilty one, and it is through Your Word that I have been deceived.' It is impossible for you (Protestants), in the presence of this single text (*Tu es Petrus*), to justify your attacks against the primacy of St. Peter."[5]

Let us hear the learned Abbé Duchesne on this subject. "The other apostolic missioners" (other, that is, than Peter and Paul), "with the single exception of St. John, disappeared without leaving behind them any precise memorials. Legend, which soon began to be busy about them, seems to have taken all the more liberty with their memories because it came upon only fugitive traditions. But Rome, the See of St. Peter, the capital of the Empire, the place sacred to the Apostles, became, without contest, the metropolis of the Church. The Asiatics themselves, notwithstanding the great privilege they enjoyed of the long sojourn of the Apostle John among them, made no difficulty in acknowledging the primacy of Rome. At

[1] "Ad annum," 325, No. 171.
[2] "Histoire des Conciles," vol. i., p. 33.
[3] "Du Pape," t. I., Chap. viii.
[4] Sess. 4, Chap. ii.
[5] Account of a conference held at Divonne, in the province of Gex, between four Catholic priests and four Protestant ministers.

the end of the first century Clement the Roman already acted in a truly papal manner, and interfered with stern authority to suppress the internal intrigues of the Church of Corinth, although that Church also was founded by the Apostles.[1] The martyr Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, signalises the pre-eminence of the Church of Rome. In the second century all Christianity flowed to Rome: heretical teachers, orthodox travellers, apologists, Asiatic bishops, Syrians, persons from Pontus, from Palestine, and from Egypt. She was the visible centre of the whole Christian movement, whether authentic or heterodox. The great metropolitan cities which were of considerable note later on, such as Carthage, Alexandria, and Antioch, had at first no prominence. Asia alone was of any importance, but only of a secondary kind, as can be seen by the conflict at the end of the second century respecting the observance of Easter."[2]

Doubtless, during the great persecutions, when living retired in the Catacombs, or imprisoned by the Cæsars, when unceasingly watched, or forced to take refuge in flight, the successors of St. Peter did not speak to the world as did a Gregory VII., or an Innocent III. It is no matter for surprise that we do not find in the papal literature of the early centuries a very pronounced utterance concerning the Roman Supremacy. In those days Popes were martyrs rather than writers; but after the fourth century we meet with abundant proof of the supremacy. It is impossible to believe that, at this period, the world would have accepted the papal supremacy if its origin had not been of much greater antiquity. To say that, in the fourth century, the Latins agreed together to make a new idol and bow down before it, is absurd. If the Pope existed in the fourth century, he must also have existed before that date.

IV.

According to the promises of Jesus Christ, then, the Church cannot err in faith; and according to the institution

[1] Hermas a short time after wrote his "Shepherd" for the whole Church.

[2] "Origines du culte chrétien," pp. 15, 16.

of Jesus Christ, she is where the Pope is. We must, therefore, conclude that the true Church is bound to possess, along with unity of government, unity also of faith, in all times and places, and that the Pope is infallible. It is mere childishness to maintain that the Church has only now discovered her own infallibility, when, in fact, for the last nineteen hundred years, minds have been discussing and affirming this very question. The personal infallibility of the Pope has its foundation in Scripture. The Gospel of St. Matthew teaches us that the Saviour, wishing to reward His disciple Simon for the testimony he had just rendered to His Divinity, said to him—"Thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build My Church" (Matt. xvi. 18). A foundation laid by God Himself can never fail. St. Leo represents Jesus as saying—"My strength becomes the principle of thy stability, in such sort that the power which belongs properly and personally to Myself becomes by participation common to thee and to Me."[1] Again we read in St. Luke—"Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and thou, being once converted, confirm thy brethren" (Luke xxii. 31, 32). The Apostles were in peril from Satan. Jesus could have succoured them directly; He did not do so. Their faith was exposed to great risk; it is Peter who must save them. It suffices for this that his faith shall never fail, according to the constant interpretation of these words both by Eastern and Western tradition. Christ, in presence of His Apostles, thrice demanded from St. Peter an assurance of his love, saying to him in reply, "Feed My lambs," "Rule over My sheep," "Feed My sheep" (John xxi. 15, 16, 17). Other pastors are called upon to feed the flock, but Peter is the Pastor of the pastors, and thus unity is secured in the one fold. Émile Emmène, Bishop of the Gauls, expresses the same belief—"he feeds the little ones, and he feeds their mothers, too; he governs the subjects and those also who command. He is, then, the shepherd of all; for, besides the lambs and the sheep, none other are left in the Church."[2]

[1] "In anniversario assumptionis suæ," Serm. IV.
[2] "Hom. in vig. sanct. Apost.," Biblioth. pp. Lugd., t. VI., p. 794.

The personal infallibility of the Pope has also its foundation in tradition, which bears fuller testimony on this point than is the case with most other Christian dogmas. "It is, therefore, to the See of Rome that the Church as a whole, that is to say, the faithful in every place, must adhere, because of its superior sovereignty."[1] The necessary consequence of this doctrine is the infallibility of the See of Rome. Otherwise, if this See could err, it follows that all the faithful would be under the obligation of erring along with her. Origen, commenting on the text of St. Matthew xvi., says—"I take this to be the true sense, that the gates of hell shall prevail neither against the Rock upon which Christ built His Church, nor against the Church herself; hence we find it written in the Proverbs, that the trail of the serpent leaves no trace upon the rock."[2] In St. Cyprian's work against the Novatians, "De unitate Ecclesiæ," he thus interrogates those who lived in rebellion against the Church of Rome—"He who keeps not unity with the Church, does he imagine that he keeps the true faith? If he abandon the chair of Peter, on which the Church is founded, can he flatter himself that he is still within the Church?"[3] It follows from this principle that the See of Peter is infallible; otherwise there might arise circumstances when it would be necessary and right to separate from it. Further on, the same holy doctor exclaims—"The rays of the sun are numerous, but the light is one; the branches of a tree are many, but the trunk is one strongly fixed on immovable roots."[4] This immobility of Rome in the truth filled St. Gregory Nazianzen with admiration. "In matters of faith," says he, "venerable Rome has from the beginning tranquilly pursued her course, holding the whole Western world in the bonds of the one ancient doctrine."[5] St. Basil implores the help of the apostolic chair in these terms—"We have immense need of your assistance, that those who have been brought up in the profession of the apostolic faith may at last renounce the errors they have adopted. It is

[1] St. Irenæus, "Adver. haeres," Book III., Chap. iii.
[2] "In Matt.," t. XII., No. 11—"Off.," t. III., Migne, p. 1003.
[3] Chap. iv.
[4] Chap. v.
[5] "Carmen de vita sua," vers. 562, p. 59.

just that we should honour the gift, conferred upon you by the Lord, of being able to distinguish what is adulterated from what is pure, and of teaching, without any alteration, the faith of the Fathers."[1] St. Ephrem, the Syrian, says—"Hail to the light of the world, which is Christ; but the candlestick is Peter, and the source of unity is the Holy Spirit."[2] St. Epiphanius states—"By 'the gates of hell' we are to understand heresies and heretics. In all possible ways the faith is solidly founded on Peter."[3] St. Jerome writes to Pope Damasus—"I am united in communion with your Holiness; for it is upon this rock I know that the Church is built. He who eats the Lamb in any other house than this, is profane. I know not Vitalian; I reject Meletius; I ignore Paulinus. He that gathers not with thee (Damasus) scatters; for whoever is not of Christ is of Antichrist."[4] St. Ambrose, in his commentary on the 40th Psalm, has this well-known phrase—"Where Peter is, there is the Church; where the Church is, there is no death, but life everlasting."[5] A bishop in the latter part of the fourth century, St. Asterius of Amasea, writes thus—"The stable and inflexible consistency of the Churches is sustained by Peter, who was constituted the true and faithful teacher of religion."[6] St. Augustine suggests this grand axiom, which should be dominant in all discussions respecting the Church—"God has placed the doctrine of truth in the chair of unity."[7] He welcomes, with transports of joy, both the decisions of Rome against Pelagianism, and the letters of Innocent I., confirming the two councils of Carthage and Milevis.

Let us now hear the testimony of Roman Pontiffs to this authority of Peter, residing in their persons. St. Sixtus III. thus speaks in a letter to John of Antioch—"The Blessed Apostle Peter transmits through his successors all that he possesses in himself. It is no light burden that we should have to preserve the Church

[1] Ep. XCII., "Ad Italos et Gallos."
[2] "Encomium in Petrum et Paulum et Andream."
[3] "Anchora," Chap. XI.
[4] "Ad. Dam.," Ep. XV.
[5] "Enarratio in Ps. XL.," cap. xix., Migne, t. I., col. 1082.
[6] "Hom. in Petrum et Paulum," Migne, p. 263.
[7] Ep. CV., class II. "Donatists," Chap. xvi.

of the Lord from all spot or wrinkle."[1] St. Leo the Great declares—"If we do anything good, if we solve difficult questions with justice and precision, this is due to him whose power lives in, and whose authority commands from this See."[2] And further on he continues—"He who receives honour in my humble person is he to whom still belongs the care of all pastors, and the charge of all the sheep confided to them; he, Peter, whose dignity never fails, even when vested in his unworthy successor."[3] Pope St. Simplicius, in a letter to the Emperor Zeno, asserts—"This rule is permanent among the successors of him to whom the Lord promised His unfailing assistance."[4] St. Gelasius affirms the same thing in a decretal letter addressed to the Greeks—"Peter reposes for ever in Rome, assuring to this See security from the gates of hell to the end of time."[5] According to these concurrent testimonies, gathered from the East and from the West, along with others which could very easily be quoted, we are entitled to conclude that, during the first eight centuries, it was universally believed that the Pope was not only the centre of unity, but also the infallible depositary of revealed doctrine. The tradition of the Church is in perfect accord with Scripture on the personal infallibility of the successor of St. Peter. Newman says—"When I read the works of St. Leo the Great, the idea of the Papal Infallibility presented itself before my mind, and I said to myself, 'This Church of Rome must be the true Church.'" Gerson and Peter D'Ailly, who did not believe in the Pope's infallibility, own that before the Council of Constance any one denying or questioning Papal Infallibility would have been regarded as a heretic. Melchior Canus and Maldonatus both admit infallibility. From an historical point of view Ultramontanism is certainly stronger than Gallicanism. Döllinger, long before the Council, said in 1843—"Papal Infallibility has not been defined as an article of faith; but he who should teach the contrary would certainly go

[1] "Ep. rom. Pont.," t. I., col. 1260.
[2] "In anniv. assumptionis suæ," Sermo III.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] Ep. IV., "Ad Zenon.," Labbe, t. IV., col. 1071.
[5] Ep. XIV., Migne, p. 90.

against the conscience of the Church, both of the present and of past time." Gratry wrote in 1866—"Almost all Catholics believe, and all admit in practice, that the Roman Pontiff, speaking *ex cathedra*, is infallible in matters of faith and morals." Gratry, a Gallican, made this avowal simply because the fact was patent. At the moment of the Vatican definition in 1870 the immense majority of the bishops gave their adhesion to the doctrine.[1]

Practically the Popes have always acted as if they were convinced of the existence of this prerogative. They do not act merely as presidents; they are also judges. They decide in matters of faith; they fulminate anathemas and issue decrees. St. Epiphanius tells us that the heresiarch Ebion was condemned by St. Clement. According to St. Irenæus, Tertullian, and Eusebius, Cerdon and Valentine were all excluded from the Church by St. Hyginus. St. Anicetus condemned Marcion, Eleutherius proscribed the errors of the Montanists, and St. Victor those of the Cataphrygians. St. Cornelius condemned the heresy of Novatian. Pope St. Dionysius proscribed the errors of Sabellius, and of Paul of Samosata. St. Sylvester condemned those of Apollinarius and Macedonius; Saint Siricius that of Jovinian; St. Anastasius I. those of Origen. St. Celestine wrote to the Bishops of Gaul ordering them to condemn Semi-pelagianism. St. Leo launched his anathema against the Priscillianists. St. Martin I. condemned the Monothelites. The Iconoclasts were combated by the decretals of St. Gregory II. and St. Adrian I. This latter, in Spain, condemned the heresy of adoptionism. The false tenets of Berengarius were condemned successively by St. Leo. IX., Victor II., Nicholas II., and St. Gregory VII. Roscelin was referred to the tribunal of Urban II. by St. Anselm. Calixtus III. censured the heresy of Peter de Bruys, at the Council of Toulouse in 1119. In 1140, Innocent III., by a dogmatic letter, decreed the form of profession of faith to

[1] *Vide* "The True and the False Infallibility of the Popes," by Fessler; "The True Story of the Vatican Council," by Cardinal Manning; "The Infallibility of the Pope, by Fr. Bottalla, S.J.; A Letter to the Duke of Norfolk," in vol. ii. of "Difficulties of Anglicans," by Cardinal Newman, etc.

be exacted from the Vaudois, before admitting them to reconciliation. Alexander IV. and Clement IV. condemned the doctrine contained in the book of William of St. Amour. Pius II., in 1549, published the bull *Exsecrabiles* against those who appealed from the judgment of the Pope to a General Council. Sixtus IV. condemned as heretical the propositions of Peter of Osima. Leo X. put forth the bull *Exsurge, Domine*, in which he proscribed forty-one of Putjer's propositions. It was the same after the Council of Trent. St. Pius V., in 1567, proscribed the seventy-two propositions of Michael Baius. In 1653, at the instance of eighty-five bishops of France, Innocent X. anathematised the five propositions of Jansenius. Sixty-five other propositions were condemned by Innocent XI. in 1679. In 1690 Alexander VII. condemned thirty-one Jansenist propositions; twenty-three others extracted from the book "Maximes des saints" were the object of the same severity on the part of Innocent XII. in 1699. Clement XI., in 1713, struck the last blow at Jansenism. By the bull *Unigenitus* this Pope condemned even the "respectful silence" with which some bishops wished to content themselves. Pius VI. issued the bull *Auctorem fidei* against the acts of the synod of Pistoia, in 1794. Gregory XVI. sent to Lamennais the encyclical *Mirari vos*, requiring him to subscribe to it in certain indicated terms, without reserve. Lamennais obeyed, but writing later on, made a reserve. The Pope protested. Lamennais gave way once more, saying bitterly—"I subscribe that the Pope is God." In our own days Pius IX. defined the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary; and he published the encyclical *Quantâ curâ*, followed by the *Syllabus* against divers systems of modern error. We see plainly that the Popes have always spoken and acted in the Church as the assembled Apostles did in the Council of Jerusalem. "It has seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to Us!" Yes, the Church has always opposed the errors of genius, its propositions and seducing conceptions by the sublime formula—*Visum est Spiritui sancto et nobis!*

Reason itself demonstrates to a certainty that a divine institution involves infallibility. When the enemies of

the Church, insulting her divine pretensions, accuse her of never consenting to any compromise, I recognise in their language an avowal of the truth of the Roman Church. If the Church be really divine, so ought also to be the authority of her word. "Being established as the basis of a Divine revelation, indispensable for salvation, and consigned to a book supernaturally inspired, I know of no absurdity comparable to that of abandoning this book to the individual interpretation of every man, learned or ignorant. And when Catholics establish against Protestants the necessity of a living, perpetual, universal authority, which is to determine with certainty the true sense of the sacred text, resolve all doubts, and judge infallibly in all the controversies that may ever spring up, what they say is so clear, so peremptorily decisive, that, if we did not know the power of prejudices imbibed even in infancy, it would seem impossible that any one could resist such evidence. In the same way, granted the necessary existence of a living, perpetual and universal authority, for the conservation and infallible interpretation of the revealed word, it would appear equally impossible to conceive how one could refuse to acknowledge this infallible authority in the Pope, who is the supreme head of the Church, her voice, and her abiding organ of action. The arguments which the Romans, on this great question, oppose to the Gallicans, are no less strong than those which Catholics in general oppose to Protestants. Infallibility is, in truth, but an extension, an ulterior consequence, of the same general reasoning, which would have no force whatever against Protestantism if it had not an equal value against Gallicanism. If the hypothesis of a divine and supernatural revelation be once admitted, Roman Catholicism is invincibly established against all contrary sects and all dissident opinions."[1]

To conclude, we must always return to the fact that the Church is anterior to Scripture, and that during the first days of the evangelical preaching, Christian doctrine was spread through the world in the name of an authority different from that of Holy Scripture. Was, then, this

[1] F. de Lamennais, "Discussions critiques," pp. 118, 119.

early preaching infallible? Most assuredly it was. No Protestant has ever contested the fact; but in virtue of what assistance was it so? It was in virtue of the promises afterwards committed to writing. That is to say, the infallibility of the Church is taught in Scripture, because the Church was infallible before the Scriptures of the New Testament existed.

Another proof of the absolute confidence which the Church feels as to her own divine origin is that in the definition of the Vatican Council she voluntarily exposed herself, short of a miraculous intervention, to the danger of being convicted of error. Henceforth we know that there is one man upon earth who possesses the power, at his own risk and peril, to verify the Church's divinity. This man is the Pope. Suppose now that the chair of St. Peter should come to be occupied by a Pope of doubtful faith, or even in secret an infidel, how could we say that he might not be tempted to justify his doubts or his incredulity by promulgating *ex cathedra* some proposition directly contradictory to one of the received dogmatic truths of the Church? In such a case, either God must intervene by a miracle, or the Church must be convicted of error. It may be objected that this hypothesis is improbable, that it can hardly either be anticipated or feared that a bishop unsound in faith should ever ascend the throne of Peter. In the Middle Ages such an hypothesis could scarcely have been discussed. The faith was so general that it would have been difficult to find incredulity in the sacred ministry. But in our own days, when the evolution of an anti-Christian science is becoming more and more accentuated amongst us, when powerful and insidious secret societies can intrude their members into the very sanctuary, it might happen that a prelate could lose the faith. In the eighteenth century Talleyrand, Cardinal Rohan, several bishops, and even some priests had a very doubtful sort of faith. The kind of Pope of whom we speak is a possibility. Most certainly he might be tempted to put the Church to the test. And then, if the Church were not divine and not infallible, what a peril this would be for her! The dread of this very danger was the

chief motive that prevented those bishops who were in the minority from at once rallying round a doctrine so generally received in the Church. They knew well that a positive miracle of God would be needed to prevent the consequences we have indicated from being realised. But these bishops thereby manifested that they did not believe with a sufficiently firm faith that the Church was from God, whilst, on the contrary, the definition of the majority testified before the whole universe, to the absolute confidence of the Church in her own divinity. For, if she had not been divine, she hereby exposed herself to be convicted of error without possibility of reply. Were the case we have imagined ever to become a fact, it would be a finishing stroke for Catholicism! The feeling of the Fathers of the Vatican Council comes out all the more strongly when we reflect that the bishops of the minority were very learned and very influential; that some among them had made overtures to Napoleon III. for the intervention of the civil power; that the bishops of the majority knew this, and had, moreover, against them the powerful polemics of the press; and lastly, that it could not possibly be asserted that these assenting bishops were taken by surprise or deficient either in light or intelligence. We recognise in the Pope who defined the doctrine of infallibility a man of such strong conviction that, at the time of the Italian spoliation, on hearing one of his domestics express a fear for the future of the Church and the duration of the papacy, he exclaimed—"My friend, you are wanting in faith. Know this! Simon may die; but Peter never!" This extraordinary conviction of the infallibility of the ecclesiastical magisterium, without being in itself a conclusive proof of the divine character of the Catholic Church, affords at least a powerful presumption that, of all the communities pretending to be founded by God, she alone is the authentic organ of the Founder of Christianity.

It is because the ancient sects, whether reformed or orthodox, have never exacted an absolute faith, that they have therefore no more than a relative faith, and that not very well defined. This defect makes these denominations

incapable of rivalry with the Church of God, on the subject of prestige or authority. Hence the angry and savage warfare of incredulity against the Catholic Church.[1] She is the great enemy, not because she obtains the adherence of her children — for all religions do that to a certain extent—but because she alone inflexibly exacts it, hereby bearing magnificent testimony to her certitude as to her own position. Impiety perceives instinctively that Catholicism alone is a real thing. When it meets with other societies on its way, it seems to say with Dante—"Let us not trouble ourselves about them. Let us look, and pass on our way." The honour of encountering contradiction and violent attack is reserved for Catholicism. Wherever impiety raises the standard of war, it is the Catholic priest who has to sustain the brunt of the battle. The Protestant minister, the Jewish rabbi, the spiritualistic philosopher, are passed by as beneath notice in this warfare. Witness the impious writings of the eighteenth century. All were directed against Rome, as though there were no Christians outside the pale of the Roman Church. Voltaire passes all descriptions when he speaks of the ministers of the Holy Gospel. They put him not merely into a rage, but into a state of frenzy. Catholicism roused him to fury. "Ecrasons l'infâme!" was his cry. "Let us stamp out the hateful thing!"

The Commune sought out only the priest. Sectarian pastors and rabbis might exercise their form of worship unmolested. When the Archbishop of Paris[2] demanded of Raoul Rigault the cause of his arrest, the latter replied —"For eighteen hundred years you have bastilled free-thought. Your turn has now come, but it will be an affair of a shorter time."[3] Is there in any place or any village some vile fellow lost to all decency, some demagogue without faith or respect for law? His worst enemy is the priest, because the priest carries, under the folds of his soutane, the Decalogue and the Gospel. The Church is an embarrassing institution. There is not one

[1] St. Jerome said of Celsus, Jamblicus, and Porphyrius, that they were *adversus Christum canes rabidi*—"Mad dogs raging against Christ." We might say the same of modern incredulity.

[2] Mgr. Darboy, who was shot by the Communists in 1872.

[3] Maxime du Camp, "Les convulsions de Paris."

of our acts which does not come under the moral law, of which she is the inflexible judge. She sets before our eyes, at every turn of the road, the ten commandments of God. At the least false step we hear her cry—*Non licet!* She puts too tight a curb on human life, and she teaches that there is a hell beyond it. We have in this the reason of the hatred that infidelity bears to the Church. She declares—"I am infallible, and, therefore, whoever does not believe as I teach, is outside the way of truth!"[1] Such loftiness of claim, such an oracular tone as this in her voice, drives free-thought into a frenzy of rage and hate. There are many proofs of the Church's divinity, but none that strike so sharply as this.

V.

Furthermore, the Catholic Church, when considered in her life and constitution, bears all the marks of truth. Her unity before the world has triumphed over both time and space.

Authentic Christianity has triumphed over time. Look at the progress of the Church along the course of the ages. No human power has been able to obliterate or to disunite her. No history in the world is more attractive than that of the battles and victories of the Catholic Church. We cannot say that she has never been attacked, or that she has been reared in purple and fine linen, or lived in unmolested peace. On the contrary, according to a fine remark of Bossuet, she "played with chains in her very cradle." It is our consolation to know that Christianity has conquered everything—absolutely everything. All the hammers of persecution and tyranny have been successively broken upon this anvil. Each age has seen her adding fresh conquests to her ancient ones, both on the map of the world and in the domain of the spirit. The twelve Galileans vanquished the Romans, the Greeks, and the

[1] Truth is one, and admits of no contradiction. Nothing can, at the same time, be both true and untrue. Nor can any proposition be, at the same time, both true and false. Hence if the proposition—"The Catholic Church is divine and therefore infallible" be admitted, it is clear that all other systems which contradict her are, *ipso facto*, false.

Jews. The martyrs conquered the Cæsars, and, at the moment that Diocletian caused his medal to be struck, bearing the inscription, *Superstitione christianâ ubique deletâ*—"In commemoration of the destruction of the superstition called Christianity throughout the world"—the Church was on the very eve of her triumph over the Roman Empire itself.

Christianity maintained her ground against Julian the Apostate, an emperor brought up in her own bosom, and whose passion—I had almost said, whose fixed idea—was "to bury the Galilean again in His tomb." She prevailed over the Barbarian, who had well-nigh swept civilisation from the earth; she conquered him, she made him her child, and she took him to her bosom. She held her own against Islam. Without the courage of the Christian and the power of his faith, we should all be Moslems at this hour. It was the Cross that drove back the Crescent. Catholic Christianity has not yielded to Protestantism; and this, to me, seems the finest triumph of all. The Reformation was armed to the teeth against her with apparently irresistible human powers, and yet the Church exists still, the same as ever, with all her dogmas intact. Not only has she not lost one of them, but she has, on the contrary, developed her creed, perfected her hierarchy, and consolidated her discipline, while Protestantism has been slowly dwindling away from inherent disintegration. Christianity outlived the philosophy of the thirteenth century, that coalition of shallow minds and contemners of all moral restraints, who were conceited enough to attempt to create a new humanity on purely metaphysical principles. At the period of the eighteenth century it seemed as though the Church was annihilated at last, such being the common opinion at the time. Faith and morality had perished among the higher classes. Voltaire was esteemed a reactionary by his contemporaries. The Church must have been deeply anchored in the hearts of the people not to have been utterly destroyed then. Once again Christianity survived the Reign of Terror, with its blood-stained scaffolds, where not only the ministers of Jesus Christ, but the humblest Christians also, were driven to their death like wild game in a battue.

After a history so marvellous, when we hear Christians, because of the perils which are ever menacing the Church, cry out in anguish, "What will have become of the Church a hundred or two hundred years hence?" we are tempted to say to them as Jesus said to His disciples, "Oh, ye of little faith, why do you doubt?" The question really is, "Has Jesus Christ, or has He not, made good the implied promise uttered by Him a few days before His crucifixion, 'Be of good courage: I have overcome the world'"? The fact is that, in spite of all assaults, and in spite of the feebleness of our resistance, the Church lives still. She is powerful; she gains her victories now as of old. M. Clémenceau lately spoke of "the splendid return to the attack made by the Church, under one of her greatest Pontiffs."[1] This, her vitality, is truly astonishing, seeing that she preaches a doctrine so exalted as to be an offence to misapplied human reason, and that she has constantly been the object of the dislike, or at least of the distrust, of most men in power. When we think of the terrible assaults she has already so successfully resisted, it is difficult to conceive how she can ever be expected to perish. In the midst of the most violent storms, she has remained erect, sustaining herself by the Cross with her eyes fixed on Eternity. . . . "A wise man built his house upon a rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and they beat upon the house, and it fell not, for it was founded on a rock" (Matt. vii. 24, 25).

Everything here below changes, decays, and disappears. The Church alone has the promise of perpetuity in the present life, and in the life to come. "She was great and respected," writes Lord Macaulay, "before the Saxons had set foot in Britain; ere the Franks had crossed the Rhine; while the eloquence of Greece still flourished in the city of Antioch; and whilst idols were still worshipped in the temple of Mecca."[2]

Dr. Schaff, one of the most celebrated Protestants at the Parliament of Religions at Chicago, rendered the following striking homage to Catholicism:—"She is indeed glorious, this Latin Church, the *Alma Mater* that civilised the

[1] *Le Journal*, 24th January, 1896.
[2] *Edinburgh Review*, 1840. Article on Ranke's "History of the Popes."

barbarism of Europe, prepared the way for and protected the Renaissance, together with the literature and the discoveries of the New World. She is still found erect as an immovable rock, attesting the truths and the events which are the foundation of our holy religion—the Catholicity, unity, uninterrupted continuity, and independence of the Church; and, even to this day, she displays the same intrepidity in evangelical enterprise, and the same self-abnegation in works of charity, as of old."[1] The Catholic Church has become inured to combats; she has seen everything fall around her. Her brow is scarred with wounds, and yet she remains ever tranquil and victorious. "Often," she may well say, "have they fought against me from my youth up until now; but they could not prevail over me" (Ps. cxxviii. 2).

But the superior excellence of true and genuine Christianity asserts itself not only in its triumphs, but in the whole course of its history, in its civilising action, and in the blessings which it has scattered abroad all along its onward path. The Church has passed through the world doing good, even as her Divine Master did before her. The standard of the Cross has ever been, in her hands, the banner of progress. Mark in this another, and by no means the least convincing, proof of her Divinity.

Since its commencement Christianity has shown itself under different aspects. From the Cenacle to the Milvian Bridge, it was the regenerator of souls; from Constantine to Charlemagne, it accomplished the complete social transformation of the nations. The regeneration of souls was effected by the Apostles and their successors; the great social revolution was the work of the monks and the Popes. The influence of Christianity has been at all times eminently civilising. The faith spreads from one kingdom to another, according to the disposition of the people. It ever carries along with it the blessings of material

[1] Barrattes, cf. p. 1194, Collection Arena, p. 158. In this Parliament a thesis had been defended which is dear to Liberalism. The union of all the divers religions in one general sentiment of philanthropy had been discussed; and, to attain it, it had been proposed to soften down the tenets of the various religions to a microscopic minimum, finely termed by Mgr. Keane, "the protoplasm of the religious idea." To wish to unite in one syncretism the most conflicting systems, is to fall straight into the arms of the most dissolvent of the theological scepticisms.

prosperity and moral grandeur, like some rich traveller who, as he proceeds from one place to another, enriches in turn the various hosts who have given him hospitality. So the torch of civilisation is handed along from the nation that has been visited to the next nation that is reached.

From the first the Church caused right to prevail over might; she abolished slavery, that bitterest form of man's domination over his fellow-man.[1] "Has she not pressed the hand of Jesus Christ?" says Sully-Prudhomme, speaking of justice.

Jesus, by manifesting His vast and impartial love in the sacrifice of the Cross, became thereby the great leveller of caste. Among the Romans, according to the "Twelve Tablets," the father of the family had the right of life and death over his children; he could even sell them. But baptism made the child a sacred thing. Henceforth he must be protected in his weakness and in the development of his growing faculties; he must be reared in the home that has received him. Thanks to the Church, even abandoned children must be gathered into places of safety, and infanticide becomes the abominable crime of murder. Marriage, from being a simple contract, is raised to the holy dignity of a Sacrament. From that moment woman is held in respect. She takes at the domestic hearth her sweet and honoured position, with all dignity and charm, as maiden, wife, or mother.

Who was it that gave true liberty to the world? It was that very religion which has been so bitterly reproached with being the enemy of liberty, and with seeking to "enlighten men only by the blaze of the burning stake." By preaching the unity of the human race, the law of charity, and the equality of man, Christianity set her condemnation upon slavery, which is founded on the idea of caste, and sowed in the soil of a common humanity the seeds of a truly noble democracy.[2] Two-thirds of humanity had been reduced to slavery; but from the time

[1] The Jubilee offering made by Brazil to Pope Leo XIII. in 1887 was the emancipation of the slaves in that country. His Holiness stated that, of all the numerous gifts made to him on that occasion, the gift of the Brazilians was the one he most prized.

[2] See, on this question, "Histoire de l'esclavage dans l'antiquité," 2 vols., by Wallon; "Les esclaves chrétiens," by Paul Allard.

of Jesus Christ, "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free . . . for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 26-28). But, as too sudden an enfranchisement would have overturned society, the Church proceeded slowly in the matter. Of the slave she first made a serf; afterwards, of the serf, a proprietor; and then, of the proprietor, the free men we are at this day. We can count no less than three hundred decrees of Councils, or of Synods, in favour of the serfs of the Middle Ages. When the haughty and steel-gauntleted baron made a descent from his castle eyrie to hew his unfortunate tenantry to pieces at pleasure, some monk would ever be on the road to meet him, with the warning—"You must render account, good sir, before the tribunal of God, of the tears you are about to cause to flow." The Truce of God was devised by the Church in order to assuage and calm the thirst for blood and revenge in her newly converted children. Nothing was more opposed to barbarism than the spirituality of the Christian. The one represented the lowest dregs of humanity, the other its most exquisite refinement. Yet the cruelty of the barbarian gave way to the meekness of the Christian; his thirst for vengeance yielded to the law of meekness and charity; his avarice learned to comprehend the spirit of disinterestedness. But Christianity had to work for long centuries upon barbarism before she succeeded in softening its turbulent nature, and replacing its deep-rooted sentiments by her own. And as the Church could not have fulfilled her providential mission without having some power of coercion placed at her disposal, she was obliged to become, by the force of circumstances, the police of society, and thus to control the habits of the different races. The canonical courts of justice served as a model to the secular tribunals, and synods were the first examples of parliaments. At this time, also, the Church raised manual labour to a position of dignity, though formerly held in such contempt. "All who live by manual labour are degraded by their work," said Aristotle. "Never has any noble sentiment come out of a shop," was Seneca's declaration—and this was the general belief of paganism. But Jesus elevated labour in His own person, by following a lowly craft, and by

Himself wearing the workman's tunic. The labourer, therefore, found in Christian associations the guarantee of his rights, with the double blessing of tutelar patronage and useful fellowship.

To the Church we owe those admirable corporations of labour, those guilds, which worked for seven centuries without any strike or disturbance. Those corporations laid the foundation of local liberties, ensuring security to commerce, and establishing brotherhoods among the labouring classes. The monks themselves set them the example. "The Benedictines," says Guizot, "brought all Europe under cultivation." "Three-eighths of the towns and cities of France owe their existence to the monks," says Montalembert, who has traced the histories of the Celtic monks, with their heroic combats in the interests of the poor. The Church, by means of the intrepid labours of her religion, built up again, little by little, in the Iron Ages, the ruins of ancient cities, and raised new ones all over the surface of our modern Europe. "Like the prophets of the Old Law, the Church at this time did not lose her self-possession, but continued to publish the testimonies of the Lord in the presence of kings, without submitting to be silenced. In this new kind of warfare the armies were composed of monks, the treasures were saints, the fortresses were monasteries, and the victories were conversions. The battle was long, and the issue uncertain, but at its close the peaceful monastery reared its victorious walls in a world become at once feudal and Christian."[1]

To the Church we owe the organisation of the corporal works of mercy. Before her time men raised triumphal arches, theatres, and temples in honour of their idols. Hospitals were unknown; it was the Church that first thought of them. She established an ecclesiastical order, the diaconate, for the distribution of alms. She created homes for abandoned children, for orphans, for the sick, for the aged, and for the outcast. Charity has embraced every form of human misery. Such repulsive objects

[1] Littré, "Études sur les Barbares et le moyen âge." Such is the testimony of an adversary well read on this question, but whose intellectual prejudices were certainly not in favour of the Church. His testimony has great weight.

as the leper, the cancerous, and the insane have all experienced the solace of her abiding succour. She multiplies her legions, devoted to charity according as they are needed on the field of the battle of life. "Manifestly," writes M. Taine, "with these men and women the ordinary equilibrium of determining motives is quite reversed; in their balance, self-love does not come first, but the love of others." [1]

Mgr. Perraud could say with truth—"Let those who have any doubt of the Divinity of Jesus Christ, and who have not sufficient intellectual education to examine into the clear proofs to be found in more learned works, at least draw near and study these servants and handmaids of God. Somewhat of the divine emanates from them." [2]

The greatest blessing of the Church has ever been the cultivation of the human mind. The book of knowledge has always been carefully preserved in the folds of the Church's robe, both episcopal and monastic. The words clergy, cleric, and clerk were synonymous with science, learning, and mental culture. For many centuries letters, the arts, and sciences had no shelter except under the protecting wing of Holy Mother Church. St. John founded schools at Ephesus, St. Polycarp at Smyrna. Close to museums, accessible to the educated, we have established our schools for the children of the people, and the bitterest raillery of our enemies consisted in the significant taunt of Celsus—"When we seek your chair of instruction we are sure to find it in the midst of a crowd of shoemakers, woolcombers, and fullers." When Barbarism flowed in upon the Roman world, science took refuge in the cloisters and presbyteries, where the children were taught gratuitously.[3] Simeon Luce, the historian of Duguesclin, says that during the fourteenth century there were in almost every village schools wherein the clergy taught reading, writing, and a little arithmetic. Though interrupted by religious strife in the sixteenth century, this effort was resumed, and continued throughout the

[1] "La reconstitution de l'Église de France."
[2] "Réponse à M. Duruy."
[3] Ordinance of Theodolphus, Bishop of Orleans, 797. See also "Christian Schools and Scholars," by Augusta Theodosia Drane, some time Provincial of the Sisters of Penance of St. Dominic, at Stone.

seventeenth and eighteenth. The parish priest acted as schoolmaster. We can never sufficiently express all that France, in particular, owes from a moral point of view, and I do not fear to add, from an intellectual one also, to those humble country priests, who so admirably realised the words of their Divine Master—"Ye are the salt of the earth; ye are the light of the world." Education for all alike was an eminently Christian formula. In time of disaster the priest was always on the spot to bind up wounds, to exhort, to instruct, and then the work of progress recommenced as before. As regards higher education, it is clear that the apologists of the first century were men of profound learning. In the fourth age the great schools of Alexandria existed, where Origen and Clement shone conspicuously. From the invasions of the Barbarians to the time of Charlemagne, the Church took particular care to preserve the monuments of antiquity. After Charlemagne the monasteries of Fulda, Reickenau, St. Gall, Corbie, and Cluny became famous seats of learning; Episcopal schools were also founded at Paris, Orleans, Cambray, Chartres, and Toul. From the twelfth century, universities multiplied under the fostering influence of the Church,[1] counting sixty-four in Europe and twenty-four in France alone. Numerous colleges were likewise established for secondary education and courses of philosophy; here history, archæology, linguistic science, historical criticism, the natural sciences, etc., were taught. The great literary renaissance was promoted by Nicholas V. and Leo. X.[2] Christian art then distinguished itself and filled the world with masterpieces of talent. It was an ungrateful task, perhaps, this profession of education due to our Pontiffs and priests; but at the same time what a fair sight were those hives of learning where, during so many ages, our fathers made and stored up for their children the wax that even now enlightens the world, and the honey that still nourishes it.[3]

[1] For an interesting as well as scholarly account of Christian education in Great Britain, see "Christian Schools and Scholars."

[2] See Pastor's "History of the Popes," translated by the Very Rev. F. J. Antrobus, of the Oratory.

[3] Read on the subject, "The Monks of the West," vol. vi.; Balmez' "Protestantism compared with Catholicism," vol. iii.; Taine's "Modern Regime," vol. i., p. 214; Allain's "Revue des Questions Historiques," 1875, vol. xvii., p. 115; Louandre, *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 15th Jan., 1877.

VI.

We have seen the Church's external unity triumph over time; let us now observe its victories over space. Catholicity can never be confined to one country; its missionaries have shed their blood in every country. The Cross which they have planted throughout the entire universe is the Cross not simply of Christ, but of Roman Christianity. We can understand in great measure this Catholicity of the Church when we take into account the Divinity of her origin. Is it not very surprising to see a society, international like the Catholic Church, having so exact a profession of faith as hers is? This Catholicity, it is true, is not one of numbers so much as one of place. But no matter, she has children everywhere. In Russia, where she is rigorously proscribed, she counts no fewer than ten millions of the faithful. It is something to be able to reckon ten million proselytes in the steppes of Russia. In England and Scotland there are now two million Catholics. In Germany two-fifths of its inhabitants profess Catholicism. In America it is by far the strongest of all the Christian communities. All Protestantism taken together may be numerically stronger, but each separate sect is very inferior in strength to the Catholic body. In Australia Catholics count a large number. They are numerous, too, in the foreign missions of China, Japan, and Persia, where the faith is daily making rapid strides. "Willing or not willing," said St. Augustine, "our adversaries are obliged to call our Church Catholic, because, if they did not, no one would understand them."

The Church being intrinsically Catholic, has Catholic instincts. The duty of announcing the "good tidings" was imposed upon her by her Divine Founder from the beginning. "All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth. Going, therefore, teach ye all nations" (Matt. xxviii. 18, 19). "Go ye into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned" (Mark xvi. 15, 16). "That which you hear in the ear, preach ye upon the housetops" (Matt. x. 27). "You are the light of the world. A city seated on a

mountain cannot be hid" (Matt. v. 14). Thus an irresistible impulse urges forward our missionaries to the assistance of the races that are seated in darkness and the shadow of death. The same voice which bade them "go forth" so many ages ago rings in their ears even now. While the physical unity of the globe is being rapidly effected by science, and every road is laid open to human activity, the Apostle asks himself whether the hour has not come at last for the triumph of Catholic unity also. The Church's spirit of proselytism never grows weary and is never exhausted. The desert flourishes like a rose. Missionaries, these angels or "Messengers of God," as Scripture calls them, hasten to bear across the world the eternal Gospel of Christ. "To judge of the superiority of Christianity over all other religions, we have only to watch what it is doing to-day upon African soil, and in the extreme East. It occupies, without exception, the whole of the New World; and, considering the progress it daily makes elsewhere, it is not impossible that it may cover, in more or less time, the entire surface of the Old Continent, as it now does that of America. If we regard closely the principles of Christianity, and the works which are the consequences of those principles, it will not be difficult to foretell its future. Christian civilisation will triumph over humanity by means of the benefits which it confers, and these will always be greatly in excess of the mistakes that it may commit."[1]

We have, then, here a society strongly united, and yet international. No other Church presents so extraordinary a phenomenon. The orthodox Russian religion is confined within the limits of its own empire. Neither Russian religionists nor Protestants are to be found in all places; but Catholics, on the contrary, belong to the races of Russia, Germany, Denmark, England, America, China, Japan, or India, and yet are children of the one true Church. Every one, whether within the Church or not, must recognise the singularity and importance of this fact, and the strong presumption which it affords in favour of Catholicism. Nothing like it has been known

[1] Barthélemy Saint Hilaire, *Journal des savants*, Sept., 1892, p. 540.

in the world before; whence the remark of Newman—"To *see* the Church is to recognise her."

It will require a good deal to bring the Christian faith to "its last gasp," though M. Clemenceau lately said it had already arrived at this extremity.[1] As a fact, the incredible vitality of the Church has never been so conspicuous as it is in these days. The Church of to-day is as active and as vigorous as when she issued forth from the Catacombs. Religion has gained in moral influence whatever she has lost in material advantages. Never has she gathered around her convictions more robust or more sincere. The supernatural sap which animates her produces, in an abundance hitherto unsurpassed, the fruits of charity towards the disinherited souls among whom she lives, victims of a material civilisation pushed, as it is, to extremes. Life is still communicated from her body, unweakened by age, directing those extraordinary impulses of the faith which are doing so much in countries lying until recently beyond her influence. In the newly discovered regions of Africa—in Tonkin, Annam, and Madagascar—we see Christian developments which yield in nothing, as regards fervour and vivacity of faith, to the Catholic populations of old Europe. Look at England, at Germany, at all Protestant countries either of the Old or of the New World. Everywhere the so-called "reformed religion" frets itself in anger. How great its impotence to pass beyond its ancient limits, to recompense itself for losses at home by making new conquests![2] Catholic countries are inundated with Protestant Bibles and pamphlets; Protestant missionaries are to be met with in every quarter of the globe. Yet all is in vain! Protestant missions continue in a state of hopeless sterility. Shall we speak of the colossal development of Catholicity in the United States? In this country where, not a century ago, there was but one Catholic to every hundred of the total population, a proportion of seven to one can now be counted; and this is constantly and rapidly increasing. There are

[1] *La Justice*, 10th Dec., 1893.
[2] On this point Marshall's "Christian Missions" should be consulted.

nearly nine millions of Catholics in the United States. Their bishops are more numerous than those of France; and New York, with a population half Catholic, now possesses more churches than Paris. In Australia the progress of Catholicism is really amazing. The Protestants themselves express surprise at this result, which was affirmed in public at the last Synod of Kensington.[1] In the east of Europe a prelate, Mgr. Strossmayer, gave occasion to a demonstration which united sovereigns and people in one universal sentiment of respect and sympathy.

In Great Britain, Mgr. Manning, Cardinal of that Church which but a short time ago was so detested in the country, received, on the occasion of his sacerdotal Jubilee, a magnificent and spontaneous ovation from the whole nation. Again, it will be noticed as a curious phenomenon, that, in a country where Protestantism in its different shades counts more than five-sixths of the population, the Cardinal Archbishop of Baltimore was requested to give a religious sanction to the inauguration ceremonies of the assembling of Parliament. Already, at the celebration of the Jubilee of the Inauguration of the Federal Constitution and Presidency of Washington, a Catholic prelate had been called upon to bestow his blessing on the representatives of the country. During the Parliament of Religions held at Chicago towards the close of the Exhibition, Cardinal Gibbons was appointed president of all the meetings, and he it was who opened each sitting of this extraordinary congress by the recitation of the "Oraison Dominicale," or Lord's Prayer. What would have been the sentiments of the emigrants of the *Mayflower*, and those puritan ancestors who fled from English soil to avoid the compromises of "Laud's Anglicanism" with the "Scarlet Woman of Babylon," had they seen their great grandchildren behaving in this manner? We have ourselves been witnesses of a similar event when the Emperor of Germany chose the Pope as arbiter in an international difference, His Majesty going twice in person to salute the "prisoner of the Vatican."

Besides all this, the promises which sustain the perpetuity of the Church are the same to-day as yesterday.

[1] *Union catholique*, July, 1896.

Had they been false, there would never have been a Church at all; but being true, her safety is assured above all the evolutions of this world, and above even the passions and errors of her own rulers. The faults with which some of the Popes have dishonoured their office, the political intrigues in which others have taken too frequent a part, the poisonings and treacheries of an Alexander VI.,[1] the luxurious life of a Leo X., the angry passions and fierce policy of a Julius II., the simoniacal and scandalous traffic in holy things, the enormous abuse of the power of excommunications—nothing of all this can shake our faith. "For a long time past," says Mgr. Perraud, "our enemies have declared that it is all over with the Church; that her influence will soon be limited to a few women and children. At the close of the nineteenth century they invited us to attend the funeral obsequies of the grand old Religion; they rang our knell in our own ears. Granting that the Catholic Church had accomplished in the past a great and beautiful work, they maintained that she had outlived her day.[2] Yet never has this Church, supposed to be defunct, borne herself so nobly before the world. In the midst of all our religious divisions, Catholics alone really come to the front. The religious question fires the soul; it lies at the root of all our differences. Religion stirs the human spirit to its depths, whether for acceptance or rejection.

The very savageness of the attacks of our enemies upon the Church proves that they do not regard her as a mere phantom or shadow. Some have gone even so far as to recognise that modern civilisation is not sufficient of itself, but must have some faith or belief to lean upon as its centre. Our influence is acknowledged to be salutary; our ethical system is alone really efficacious from a social and individual standpoint. In vain have all endeavours been made to uproot the sacred Cross which eighteen centuries have so firmly fastened in the earth. In vain have men wished to force on Jesus Christ a sacrilegious descent from His Cross, and this once for all. Do we

[1] "The *Bullarium* of this monster is irreproachable," said J. de Maistre, speaking of Alexander VI.

[2] *Mandement à propos du jubilé sacerdotal de Léon XIII.*

not perceive that on the blood-stained bed, from which yesterday they sought to detach and precipitate Jesus, they would fain replace Him to-day silently and tenderly, because of the very need the human heart experiences of a Divine Consoler?[1] Where are now our adversaries? Deism has well-nigh disappeared through its own inherent powerlessness. The doctrines of the evolutionist and the naturalist, more or less impregnated with pantheism and atheistic materialism, have renewed amongst themselves the Babel of confusion. If there be obscurity in our Christian mysteries, nothing in them is condemned either by reason or by erudition. This is the justification of our faith, the ever-victorious answer we make to the sarcasms of scepticism. More fortunate than man, the Church grows old without decrepitude, and it is no presumption to affirm that her past corresponds to her future. She breathes on eternally, for her breath is the breath of Pentecost. She who was dead is more full of life now than she was a hundred years ago. *L'écrasement de l'infâme*—the annihilation of "the infamous one"—has been an utter failure. Yes, she lives on, in spite of sectarian persecution, official disdain, or frivolous indifference. She is always on the alert, although always suffering from assaults. She has preserved all her dogmas and all her sacraments. If she has had to weep over some defections, yet she has also chronicled the noblest conquests. Such is the Church, outside which there is nothing but home-sickness for the souls of those who, having once known, have forsaken her. Christianity worn out! The Church come to an end! We will believe it only when we shall have seen the Catholic programme fully carried out, paganism evangelised, peace replacing war, the poor and the rich each the mutual support of the other, liberty of conscience established and honoured throughout the universe, science in an attitude of humble adoration before

[1] "We have recovered our right to the closed heavens, recognised the beauty of the old beliefs, done justice at last to the sweetest of books, and looked with love and respect on the dearest of Martyrs. Who has done this for us? You, O Catholic Church, you alone! We have looked at you long enough now. You have not given us mere bread in exchange for the Host profaned, but also the hope beyond the tomb, which we snatched from the poor, whose only resource it was."—Séverine, *Journal*, 16th June, 1895.

the divine mystery, the good regarded by literature as the inseparable companion of the beautiful, and, finally, the whole world conquered by the love of Christ.

VII.

Another special character of the true Church is her independence and homogeneity. The reformed and the Oriental Churches are all more or less subject to the civil power, and more or less divided. But what most astonishes her adversaries, from a merely human point of view, is that Catholicism is the only religion which bows down before no State; the only religion which presents an united front to the enemy everywhere. "We must acknowledge," says M. Vinet, a Genevese Protestant, "that the Catholic Church has never known servitude."[1] On the contrary, she has ever adopted the tone and attitude of one who commands. She has sometimes been able to make an invasion in a domain not always hers; but she has determinedly repulsed any invasion of her own domain, that, namely, of independence and spiritual truth. Never have kings been spoken to in the manner that they have been addressed by Popes. Gregory VII. fought against Henry IV., Emperor of Germany, with a courage never wanting to the papacy in difficult circumstances. "I have loved justice and hated iniquity," said he before his death, "therefore do I die in exile."

The legates of the Holy See hesitated not to answer Henry II. of England, the persecutor of St. Thomas Becket, thus—"Sire, utter no more threats. We fear them not, for we come from a Court which is accustomed to command both emperors and kings." Innocent III. excommunicated Philip Augustus of France and John of England. He also resisted the Emperor Frederic II. in the famous contest concerning Investiture, and was obliged to fly to Lyons. This was the fearless Pope whom the emperor had caused to be elected, in the hope of making a creature of him to serve his own ends. Boniface VIII. had warm disputes with Philip le Bel. To an ambassador of the king, who would fain persuade him to abandon the

[1] "Essay on the separation of Church and State." 1858.

rights of the Church, he replied with spirit—"Rather strike at my neck! rather take my head! Here they are." Clement VII. preferred to lose all England rather than to blot out from the Gospel the word of Christ—"What God has joined together, let no man put asunder."[1]

Leo X. launched his condemnation against Luther, thus allowing the greater part of the children of the Church in Germany to pass over to the enemy, rather than refrain from protest against the false doctrines of the so-called "reformer."[2]

Pius VI., for having refused to approve the civil constitution of the clergy, became the victim of the pro-consuls of the French Revolution. Pius VII., a feeble old man, was imprisoned at Fontainebleau, and ill-treated by Napoleon for his resistance to the imperial policy, and his defence of the canonical institutions of Rome. Whatever may be said of the papacy, these men were all truly remarkable pontiffs, who, seated on the chair of the Apostles, seem to our eyes infinitely more admirable and more worthy of veneration than the senators of Rome on their cural chairs.

If Christianity be not Divine, at any rate nothing like it has ever been seen, or ever will be seen again in the world.

What is there, for instance, that can be compared to this teaching, at once Catholic and international, and yet everywhere the same; or to this infallibility of a living Church? Revolutions may despoil the Popes of their temporal power, but they have ever retained the empire of souls. This empire is limited by no frontiers, no seas, and no continents. The sun never sets upon the Pontifical dominions. The papal authority does not act as the external sovereign of society only; it regulates also both thought and will. From the very spot where Nero's living torches lighted up the imperial city, the Pope commands the whole world, and the world answers.

[1] See "The First Divorce of Henry VIII.," by Mrs. Hope.

[2] It is unusual for seceders from the Church to embrace any form of Protestantism nowadays; the majority of those ecclesiastics who have abandoned their allegiance to the Church in recent times have relinquished Christianity altogether. The sincerity of such as have adopted Protestantism in any shape is very doubtful.

"Credo!" This voice of doctrinal authority, ringing from one end to another of the Catholic universe, is like the voice of the Lord, "full of power"; "full of magnificence." *Vox Domini in virtute: Vox Domini in magnificentia* (Ps. xxviii. 4). It is impossible to imagine a society more compact, more closely serried, than the Catholic Church, or one whose members are more firmly united to each other by the strongest and most sacred ties. Catholicism has never been more thoroughly united than it is to-day. Gallicanism is dead. Fifteen hundred bishops, at least, obey the Pope. They form but one battalion. When the Pope has spoken the cause is ended. *Roma locuta est; causa finita est.*

The triumph of a Galilean fisherman, as the spiritual ruler of millions upon millions of men, for ages upon ages of time, is a unique fact in history. Non-Catholics cannot help feeling that the Church is an incomprehensible power, the banishment of which from the earth would be no easy task. "One really cannot tell," wrote M. Hanotaux recently, "whether the Catholic Church will vanquish or be vanquished in the contest."[1] On this question one of the most learned of our French Protestant contemporaries thus expresses himself—"It is not one of the least singular of spectacles of the present epoch to behold an institution like the papacy, the existence of which seemed only a few years ago a kind of anachronism, an old-world relic, now restored all at once to new life and public favour, adding bright rays of youth and hope to the aureola of antiquity and glorious memories, wherewith the ages of the past have crowned it. In the midst of the trouble caused both to consciences and interests by the growing power of the working classes, and their passionate aspirations after happier and more justly-balanced social conditions, we ask ourselves whether the papacy may not be the one authority capable of arbitrating between capital and labour, of facilitating the solution of the great social problem, of arousing the wealthy to a sense of their duty, and disarming the growing discontent and envy of the poor." And further on he says—"In contemplating the Catholic Church, it

[1] "Spectacles contemporains."

is impossible not to feel both admiration and veneration for an institution, the most weighty in its influence, the most imposing in its duration, that the world has ever seen; by whose side the mightiest empires make but a poor comparison both as to time and place, an institution which has been from the first ages until now an ever-flowing fountain of devotedness, holiness, and civilisation; and whose history has developed itself, through the revolving centuries, with a logical power that at once confounds the reason and ravishes the imagination."[1]

This aspect of the Church is hers, and hers alone. "If Catholicism should ever disappear," said Maxime du Camp, "Christianity would not be long following it." It is this great Church which really keeps all the different sects alive. Protestants may say what they like; they live beside the waters of "the great Babylon." If the Church did not exist, what would there be for them to protest against? Free-thinkers and half-believers uphold Protestants, because they make common cause with them against the Church. Protestants make friends with all the adversaries of the papacy, "all the enemies of the Eternal See," as de Maistre calls them.[2]

A last excellence of Catholic Christianity, and one which proves much in favour of her Divine authority, is, that, side by side with the dogmatic strictness which characterises her, she possesses a marvellous aptitude for adapting herself to all times and circumstances, and for assimilating herself to all races and individuals. "Fixed firmly on a doctrinal basis," says M. le Vogue, "the Church nevertheless bends with admirable suppleness both her government and her mode of action to suit the exigencies of the times. She always wears the arms and the habit of the age. She has substituted the Pope for Cæsar, one motive power for another, in the strong machinery which

[1] G. Monod, *Revue historique*, August, 1895.

[2] Most Protestants admit that Theism, Deism, Pantheism, Islamism, Solimanism, Theosophy, and other systems which deny the Divinity of Christ are "not of God," and are therefore anti-Christian. "He that gathereth not with me scattereth." It is a significant fact that the Eastern Schismatical Churches, the Dutch Jansenists, the German Old Catholics, the English Ritualists, and all sections of Protestants are willing to join hands with unbelievers in assailing the Church and the Vicar of Christ.

carries on the work of Rome. With the Renaissance she was learned, lettered, and artistic. In the two centuries following, she was a school of diplomacy. Pius IX., after the Revolution, was the most Liberal of all the sovereigns of his time."[1] One of the most extraordinary marks of this Church is, furthermore, her power of adaptation, without losing any ingredient of her true character or changing any of the effects produced by her, to races the most varied and to civilisations the most dissimilar. While she is the firmest, the Church of Jesus Christ is at the same time the most flexible, of all institutions.[2] "Christianity is the most supple of religions; therein lies her special glory," says Kuenen, the unbeliever. The Church knows how to make herself "all things to all men." She penetrates into every nationality, adds strength to it, shows her superiority over it only by assimilating it, as her victory consists in combating the excesses of national character, in retrenching merely that which is too pronounced a feature in the popular mind, just as pruners clear away useless branches. The Spaniard, the German, the Pole, the Sicilian, the Italian, and the Frenchman have nothing in common, as far as regards national character. Nevertheless, each one of these races is, after its own manner, perfectly Catholic.

The Church, as a living organism, thus unites tradition with progress, and fixity of dogma with her development. What admirable wisdom! that knows how to proportion itself to all the needs of civilisation, that at one time urges forward, at another restrains, the onward march of the ages. Leo XIII. recently wrote—"The Church watches, with a vigilance full of love, the progress of humanity, and never refuses to accommodate herself, as far as possible, to the reasonable necessities of the times."[3] All the religions which have been hitherto seen upon earth have disappeared along with the social state to which they were attached; not one has been able to resist the breath of a superior civilisation, nor the critical scrutiny of science and of history. The Church alone stands erect

[1] "Regards historiques et littéraires."

[2] Like St. Paul, she is "all things to all men that she may save all."

[3] Letter to Cardinal Rampolla, 8th Oct., 1895, on the subject of the Italian festival of 20th Sept. and its accompanying circumstances.

amid the ruins of all other systems, whether philosophical or religious. Alone she withstands the attacks of a defective science, in spite of the changes of time, and despite the incredible medley of incongruous racial elements, which she has to bring into conformity with herself. "No religion, save one, can bear the test of science. This oracle is surer than was that of Calchas. Science is a species of acid which dissolves all metals but gold."[1]

VIII.

We have endeavoured to set forth the positive proofs which the Church invokes in favour of her truth; but, that this apology may be more complete, an answer must be given to certain attacks which have been made against her.

Our adversaries, then, especially Protestants, argue against us from the ground of the material and temporal prosperity of Protestant, as compared with Catholic, countries. This objection, to which certain enemies of Catholicism attach much force, does not seem to us so strong as it does to them. It is true that Protestantism, by reason of its principles of free examination and private judgment, according to the present interpretation of them, favours personal initiative. The exercise of this, however, requires that the ground be already prepared. In an intelligence which is neither inquisitive nor active, it will remain passive in the merely traditional stage. It is a question far more of race than of religion. The English, the Germans, and the Americans astonish the world by their commercial activity and the largeness of their enterprises. Yet they arrive at these results not because they are Protestants, but because they are English, Germans, or Americans. They possess the business qualities of their respective nationalities. But are not Protestants, as well as Catholics, impregnated with the virtues of Christianity?[2] A proof

[1] De Maistre, "Du Pape," Liv. IV., p. 32.

[2] The Protestant argument savours strongly of Pharisaism, for it implies that the professors of anti-Catholicism are blessed with temporal prosperity because of their very superior piety! But this argument proves too much, for it is not denied that the Jews possess superior business capacity to Christians, and that they are, as a race, richer than Christians. Jeremias says—"Why doth the way of the wicked prosper? Why is it well with all them that transgress and do wickedly?" (xii. 1; see also Job xxi.). "Behold the man that made not God his helper, but trusted in the abundance of his riches" (Ps. li. 9).

that race is the grand factor in this question is that the French, although Catholics, yield in nothing to their neighbours from any one of these points of view. Then, again, it must be considered that the population of England is by no means entirely Protestant, that America is largely not so, and that in Germany Catholics form two-fifths of the people. Nor can it be said that in these countries the Catholics are inferior to Protestants in science, or in the spirit of enterprise, or in commercial activity. Are they not, as well as others, at the head of all public movements? Catholicism, in the eyes of Protestants, means the neo-Latin races, Spain and Italy, two nations regarded as decadent. Now, the Italian and the Spaniard, even were they Protestants, could never be equal to the Englishman or the American. This is self-evident. When we read history we see clearly that doctrine does not make the man. A doctrine the least elevated of all in the order of truth, if embraced by a great soul, may produce marvellous results, and *vice versa*. For example, Stoicism, an inconsequent doctrine, though not without beauty in some aspects, has produced characters of the most elevated type, surpassing in nobility a great number of Christians; while, on the other hand, Christianity, professed by one of an effeminate and vicious nature, may produce no very grand results. This is our answer to the above objection.[1]

Protestants object, furthermore, to the "intolerance of Catholics." They quote the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, the Dragonnades of mid-France, the Auto-da-fé of Spain, the Revocation of the edict of Nantes, etc. It requires a very strong dose of bad faith to enable any student to draw from these facts conclusions either favourable to Protestantism, or unfavourable to Catholicism. The persecution which Protestant England for three centuries waged against Catholic Ireland, will be an ineffaceable stain upon her brow for ever. Irishmen have been obliged to emigrate for the past three hundred years lest they

[1] The pagan Saxons conquered and oppressed the Christian Britons, but this is no more a proof of the inferiority of Christianity than is the Turkish persecution of their Armenian subjects a proof of the superior excellence of Islamism. The early days of Christianity exhibited no marks of temporal prosperity; they were spent in the Catacombs.

should die of hunger on their native soil.[1] The frightfully severe laws which, until lately, existed against Catholicism in Sweden and Norway; the tyranny of the German principalities in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries; the History of Kulturkampf, both Prussian and Swiss, are all equally terrible witnesses against Protestantism. If Catholics have sometimes been intolerant (and it is quite true that they have), the Reformers and their progeny have simply never ceased to burn with the acrid flame of fanaticism.

One objection still remains, and we must confess that it contains a painful truth. Jesus Christ, you say, came to renew the world. How is it then that Christianity, after existing in the world for two thousand years, has won over only a small proportion of the human race, notwithstanding the unflagging zeal and courage of its missionaries? Has human nature, in general, rallied round Jesus Christ? Far from it. In the extreme East, Buddhism and Brahminism still hold captive in error hundreds of millions of men. In Africa and in the Pacific Islands, fetishism and idolatry still reign in all their extravagant and repulsive forms. Islamism still extends over entire races in the East the scimitar of its false prophet. Outside Christian Europe, and America colonised by Christians, the world is pagan. Has Christianity then miscarried? Its results are certainly not what they should have been, were its institution divine. The objection is a strong one, but it can be urged with equal truth against all philosophy and all spiritual belief. If God exists, how can He allow so many nations to be ignorant of Him? He cannot be indifferent in that which concerns His free creatures. Christians point to the mystery of the Fall in explanation of this apparent abandonment. Once on a time the Patriarch of Idumea, seeing the unequal partition of blessings and of sufferings, and the prosperity of the wicked, dared one day to raise his voice in remonstrance.

[1] Read "Les Études sur l'Irlande contemporaine," by Mgr. Perraud. Undoubtedly Ireland has suffered severely through its staunch adherence to Catholicism, and, until O'Connell obtained religious toleration by the passing of the Catholic Emancipation Act, the persecution of Catholics was always in more or less vigorous activity, both in Ireland and in Great Britain.

But God answered him with these just words—"Who art thou that I should render thee an account of My designs? Hast thou power to create and preserve as I have? Of what nature is thy wisdom that it should sit in judgment on Mine? When thou wert still in the abyss of thy nothingness, could I have then consulted thee?"

We admit that these are grave objections. Nevertheless, and let us not be weary of repeating it, Christianity is strong in the evidence of history. It rests upon facts, attested as never facts were before. If religion is full of mysteries, this is so because God is mysterious. God knows that which befits Him; and we from other sources—from reason and from revelation—are convinced that God cannot commit injustice. Soldiers, on the eve of a battle, discuss sometimes the plan of their general. They have no right to do this, because in the battle itself they cannot see the design aimed at; from their situation in the fight they can neither perceive what takes place on the whole field nor observe its separate details. What ought we, then, to think of ourselves, when we presume to criticise the work of God—a work infinitely less intelligible to us than the plan of campaign sketched out by a general is to the least experienced of his recruits? "The more I reflect upon the works of God," says Herder, "the more incomprehensible I find them."

We cannot give a reason for God's acts except by recalling, like St. Paul, the idea of the sovereignty of a God who takes that which He wills to take, and leaves that which He wills to leave, and finds, nevertheless, according to His own impenetrable secret, the means to be ever in all His dealings infinitely just and infinitely holy. Jacobi made a profound remark on the question of the difficulties generally met with in all philosophical and religious systems—"We are born in belief; and we are obliged to live and die in it." He was speaking of those who would have everything made perfectly clear and comprehensible. In vain would we have a perfect understanding of all things here below; in vain do we cultivate our mental capacity to

its highest point; for there will always be an impassable limit. Our human condition is such that we can never find truth without its being enveloped in obscurity.

We may add that Christianity is in its infancy still. It is clear that we have done little more as yet than simply emerge out of darkness; we cannot return to the Middle Ages. Before fifty years are passed, Russia will be a free country. All its "orthodoxy" will have vanished. The same will take place in England, in Germany, and in America, in which countries Protestantism will be unable to stand the test of discussion. There may be, in these countries, certain isolated minds that will remain Christian without being Catholic. But, as regards the masses, it will be much if they still believe in a God, while those who are pious will inevitably become Catholics. Protestantism is doomed to thorough and complete rout.[1] As to the pagans, their evangelisation will proceed more slowly. We can foresee how it will be accomplished. Civilisation must penetrate everywhere. It will be with pagan nations as it has already been with individuals amongst them who have come to Europe for initiation into the higher culture—some will return enlightened converts; others as confirmed sceptics. The former will declare that the most advanced stage of civilisation finds its true home in Christianity. This religion, therefore, is favourable to the progress of reason; and, if they embrace any definite religion, it will be Catholicism. As for the others, they will at least not retain the fanatical hatred of their forefathers against Christians. They will confess to themselves—"After all, Christ is worth as much as our Buddha or our Mahomet." The natural result of their scepticism will be tolerance. In every way European civilisation will promote and bring about the free preaching of Christianity. Such is the opinion of the learned Abbé Duchesne. These are his words—"Christianity appears to be the religion of Europe. Like the other elements of European civilisation — law, art, literature, and natural philosophy — Christianity is indigenous to that part of

[1] "A house divided against itself cannot stand, and a kingdom divided against itself shall be brought to desolation" (St. Matt. xii. 25). "Is Christ divided?" (1 Cor. i. 13).

the world which has the Mediterranean for its centre. Doubtless, her development will follow its own course, but it will be by the assimilation of the exterior elements —philosophical, judicial, moral, even religious—which existed before it. Its dogmatic formulas and the style of its theology pre-suppose the Greek philosophy; its worship presents many features of resemblance to those rites which preceded it; its law is to a great extent borrowed from the principles of Roman law. Semitic in origin, it is Greco-Roman in development. This circumstance should help to solve the objection that arises from the comparison of the extent of the inhabited world with the limited spread of Christianity beyond Europe and America. The religion of Jesus Christ being the only true religion, is destined to become the definitive religion of humanity. But all the same, because of its long and intimate union with the civilisation of Europe, it seems right that its diffusion should keep pace with the conquests of that civilisation itself, respecting the final triumph of which there can be no reasonable doubt. The day must come when Africa, India, and China will desire our usages, our customs, our systems of policy, and our social organisations, to supplant their own, both in private and public life. Then will be the hour for, not the first Christian efforts, since these date from long ago, but for the grand triumph of Christianity. We must expect, however, that this success will be a little qualified at first. Along with the Christian religion European civilisation will, of course, carry everywhere its free-thought, its pre-occupations exclusively material, and its thirst for easily-obtainable pleasures. Nevertheless, a time will come when everything in humanity that tends towards God, towards the beautiful, the good, and the true, will be closely united to Jesus Christ. The Church will then attain its maximum of Catholicity. As it was with the civilisation of Athens and of Rome, so also will the religion that sprang from Jerusalem conquer the world, as far as the world is capable of being conquered by virtue and by truth."[1]

That philosophical religion, which M. Janet maintains is

[1] "Les origines chrétiennes," 1st Part, Chap. i., p. 5.

to "replace the Catholic Church, as well as all the forms of positive religion," can never be seriously accepted, seeing that the most powerful arguments in favour of spiritualism are not at all within the comprehension of uncultivated minds; and, also, because the human soul will ever continue to raise insoluble objections against those arguments, no matter how strong they may seem to be.

How could it be true that the God of reason, who waits for us at the close of life, has been all along so indifferent to His own creatures as never to have spoken to them? The soul seeks in this philosophical religion some support on which she may lean, and finds therein but a broken reed that only pierces the hand which trusts to it.

Furthermore, morality is dependent upon dogma: it cannot do without it. Christian morality is not elastic. It does not consist merely in the observance of the laws of worldly decency: it consists in submitting the most natural of our inclinations to the will of God, because He will not allow us to indulge them, even when such indulgence does no harm to society at large. For instance, private sins against chastity that are simply personal do no injury to another; yet, from a Christian point of view, every such sin is grave, and merits the penalty of hell.

It cannot, then, be said that Christian morality is independent of dogma. To attain the complete renunciation of all sinful pleasure, we must believe in Jesus Christ. Our faith in Him must be strong and courageous, and must produce in us a firm conviction that, should death supervene on such an offence as this unrepented of, the soul would be for ever lost. The morality of the "strait path" is by no means the "widened" morality of men of the world. We are fully justified in applying to those who would substitute the maxims and morals of philosophy for the dogmas and precepts of the Church, these words addressed by the Psalmist to the impious of his own days, "The wicked have told me fables; but not as Thy law" (Ps. cxviii. 85).

CHAPTER VI.

THE CHURCHES.

"In the Protestant exegesis, Christ and Christianity become a problem. Now, we cannot make an act of faith in a problem."—STRAUSS, "The Old and the New Faith," p. 217.

Nomen habes quod vivas, sed mortuus es.—"Thou hast the name of being alive, and thou art dead."—Apocalypse iii. 1.

IN regard to the Catholic Church, the authenticity of which we have been demonstrating, the incomprehensible unity of which we have traced in detail, surrounded, as she is, by so many human societies separated from her, and the powerful vitality of which we have endeavoured to portray; this Church, in the midst of which, as M. Rénan expresses it, "Jehovah still walks," and which alone is able to arouse either admiration or hostility in the breast of her enemies—in regard of her, it is difficult to understand why she does not, by her inherent majesty, convince and win over those Christian sects which are not of her own family. Or rather, we should fail to understand this, were it not for the words of St. Paul, *Oportet hæreses esse*—"For there must be also heresies." Yes, heresies must be a divine necessity, for it will always be a mystery to the independent thinker how intelligent Christians can yield up their confidence to a sect which, however extended, however ancient, or whatever its intrinsic qualities, is a thousand miles removed from all just comparison with the Catholic Church. Let us now submit ourselves to the necessity of examining some of these confessions so manifestly inconsistent with themselves, although we have no hope of being able to explain how these Churches can possibly number either enlightened or sincere persons amongst their advocates.

The only Christian communions worthy of discussion are Protestantism and the Oriental Communions.

Protestantism comprehends three great sections—the Lutheran, the Calvinistic, and the Anglican.[1] The inclination or tendency of Protestantism is twofold. There is the orthodox tendency, which admits of no radical changes, although it has its degrees of orthodoxy; and there is the liberal tendency, the first principal of which is to make reason pre-eminent in the examination and interpretation of Revelation. This tendency admits of a thousand shades, from such as approach very near to orthodoxy, till we come to those which border on actual scepticism.[2]

For the most part, orthodox Protestants fully admit the Divinity of Jesus Christ, in the Catholic sense. They maintain the inspiration of the Bible, and favour the existence of a Church, a Creed, a Hierarchy, and a form of worship. Liberal Protestants reject the supernatural. They contend that there are errors, and inexplicable difficulties in the Bible. They admit that there are Churches, but they term them Free Churches. They grant the principle of meeting together, but they will not hold any synods. With them all measures must be put to the vote. They do not definitely admit that Jesus Christ founded a Church which has a right to command our obedience. Other Protestant sects are at one with them here, but these have additional pretensions of their own. They reject all Creeds, all Councils, and all authority. They will have no "intermediaries" between God and man. Their Christianity is a thoroughly laical religion. For the matter of that, many of the liberal Protestants also profess to listen to reason alone on all Christian questions.[3]

[1] The minor sects are numerous, and every year adds to their number. In the British Isles alone there are some 300 distinct sects, each one of which is entirely separate from the rest, and has its own doctrinal peculiarities.

[2] Almost every shade of religious belief from what is a very near approach to Catholicism on the one hand, down to Agnosticism on the other, is found among the ministers of the Anglican Church. Most of its adherents boast of its comprehensiveness as one of its most admirable features.

[3] See Bossuet's "Variations of Protestantism"; Moehler's "Symbolism"; Blunt's "Dictionary of Sects, Heresies, and Schools of Thought."

I.

That which characterises Protestantism as a whole is that it does not contain within it any living authority for the interpretation of the Bible. The Bible is the sole rule of faith in orthodox Protestantism, the sole rallying point for its numerous sects of every name and form.[1] In matters of faith each individual may lawfully admit or deny what seems good to him, without acknowledging any authority in the world as having the right to restrain, on any one point, his liberty and independence of thought. Protestantism is nothing if it is not this.

It can be refuted and stripped of its defence by the evidence of history, and by its own self-contradictions. To begin with the traditional point of view, it may be very easily established that Protestantism is not the original and authentic Society founded by Jesus Christ. In regard of each sect we know the day of its birth—a fact which of itself invalidates its pretensions. Thus Lutheranism dates from Luther. The Lutherans formulated their doctrines in the Confession of Augsburg in 1530, held the conference of Smalkalde to defend them, and spread themselves through the greater part of Northern Germany, Sweden, and Denmark, and, by the Peace of Augsburg, in 1555, obtained religious liberty throughout the Empire. Calvinism dates from Calvin. Passing by Geneva in 1536, he was detained there by Farel and Viret, who were establishing a sect of Protestants, and he became the chief of this sect, giving his name to it. Calvinism thence spread from Geneva into part of Switzerland, France, Western Germany, the Low Countries, Scotland, England, and the United States. As regards the Anglican Church, which adopted, to some extent, the doctrines of Calvin, we know that it was definitely established under Elizabeth, by the Act of Uniformity, in 1562, after the schisms of Henry VIII., Edward VI., and the subsequent Catholic reaction under

[1] The popular boast is that "the Bible only is the religion of Protestants." How a Book can be a religion it were difficult to explain.

Mary Tudor.[1] We have here the birth-record of the three chief sections of Protestantism.

Protestants may affirm, if they please, that they can trace back along an unbroken line to the preaching of "the pure Gospel." History pronounces against any such claim. And even if they did this after a fashion, it would not be by virtue of any definite profession of faith, nor in any way as an organised visible society. The Protestant Churches were not in existence before the sixteenth century. Hence the Reformers fall back into the condition of Protestants of the individualistic school, who assert that true Christianity, as it was founded by Jesus Christ, is not a visible society at all. Both parties are refuted by the same reasoning. Let not Protestants imagine that they can count as ancestors "all the just, who, since the time of Jesus Christ, have lived, unknown to men, but recognised by God, within the bosom of the Roman Church," without partaking of her errors. How could these just men, if they were hidden, constitute the visible Church of God? And if they were known only to God, what authority have we for saying that they professed the same doctrines that their alleged descendants believe in at the present day? Perhaps Protestants will explain that they come down from the Christian sects, which, in the Middle Ages and at a still more distant period, separated themselves from the Roman Church. The claim is a modest one, seeing that among these sects very few were at all edifying in point either of doctrine or morality.[2] No, Protestantism will not gain much in that quarter. In fact, how can an unchanging and ever-visible Church be constructed out of a series of conflicting sects, not less

[1] The English Church, whatever its pretensions may be, is only a colony of the Roman Church. "It is strictly conceivable," says the Abbé Duchesne, "that those Christianities which can claim apostolic founders, as St. John, St. Thomas, St. Andrew, should find in this circumstance a pretext for particularism, and should be proud of their antiquity; but in England, history is a witness that she (England) can be apostolic only if she is Roman."—"Catholiques et romains," *La Quinzaine*, 15th Jan., 1895.

[2] The Parker Society, in the middle of the present century, published the works of the English Reformers in fifty-five volumes, which can still be easily obtained at a very moderate cost. Unfortunately, their descendants know very little of the real teaching of the Reformers, but Dr. Littledale, whose hatred of Catholicism has never been excelled, in his "Lecture on Innovations" describes them as "utterly unredeemed villains." And these were the founders of the religion which he professed.

opposed to each other than they are to the Catholic Church, and often, even, to the Protestantism that claims descent from them?

The Reformers affirm that the Catholic Church is not the true Church; that she has erred; that the gates of hell have prevailed against her; that from the sixth to the sixteenth century she was plunged in falsehood and iniquity. The book of the Homilies of the Church of England teaches that "the whole Church was drowned in damnable idolatry for the space of eight centuries and more." [1] We forthwith ask the question—"Could salvation be found in the Catholic Church before the time of Luther and Calvin?" If the Protestant answer is "Yes," it follows that the Church had preserved the essentials, at any rate, of Christian truth. If, formerly, one could be saved in the Catholic Church, he can be saved therein now, because, as we have seen, the Church has made no innovation.[2] Since, therefore, we can safely remain within the bark of Peter,[3] we have no need to court shipwreck in the lifeboat of Protestantism. But if the Protestant answer to the above question be "No," then the inevitable consequence is that during fifteen centuries all Christianity was outside of the way of salvation. The Christian conception of a Church in that case becomes absolutely false; and the prediction uttered by Jesus is also false! We should say to Protestants—"Since you admit, as your very faith obliges you to do, that the Church was under a fatal deception during fifteen hundred years, and that, for all this time, Christians were not in the possession of the truth, Christianity is a mere human institution. God came down to earth through love of men; He died in order to bring the truth to them; but, for fifteen hundred years after that, He suffered them to be deprived of the means of salvation.[4] In such a case as this, what becomes of the

[1] "Homily against Peril of Idolatry."

[2] See the preceding chapter.

[3] "And going up into one of the ships that was Simon's . . . sitting, He taught the multitudes out of the ship" (St. Luke v. 3, 4).

[4] Some of the smaller and more modern denominations maintain that "true Christianity" disappeared shortly after the death of the Apostles, and that it was not re-discovered until the advent of the founders of their respective sects. Furthermore, that outside these small "isms" the correct meaning of the Bible and genuine Christianity do not now exist, the whole

Christian Revelation? Of what utility was it? "But," they reply, "good faith can save a soul, though revelation cannot!" This Protestant principle, we answer, was unknown during fourteen centuries of Christianity. How, then, can it form part of "Christian truth"? On the contrary, if Jesus spoke the truth when He predicted, to the true Church, that the gates of hell should not (*i.e.*, never) prevail against her, that Church could not, for one single instant, fall away from the truth. Either Protestants deceive themselves in refusing to believe the logical and traditional interpretation of Christ's words, or Christ Himself was mistaken when He promised to His Church an assistance which was to be, for so long a time, and in so manifest a way, at fault. This argument ought to be quite enough to close the lips of proselytising Protestants. And, as a general argument, it forms an unanswerable objection to bring against the Reformation itself.

To get out of this difficulty, numbers of Protestants declare that it is not necessary to adhere to any one form of Protestantism. According to them, "There is no orthodoxy at all in the world, and no visible Church which any one is bound to obey. We must all be individualist Christians. We must, by a long and serious examination, make out our own Christianity; that is, first arrive at the conviction that Christianity is a fact historically divine, then form our own creed from what we read."[1]

A grave presumption against such an individualist Christianity as this, is that we have in it a phenomenon peculiar to the nineteenth century alone. No heretics

Church having become corrupt, paganised, idolatrous, etc., etc. On the generally "infamous" character of the Catholic Church, Atheists, Moslems, Jews, and Protestants cordially agree. And this very agreement between Protestantism and the anti-Christian systems suffices to brand it with the mark of unsoundness. "What fellowship hath Christ with Belial?"

[1] The Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England allege that the Churches of Alexandria, Jerusalem, Antioch, and Rome have all erred in matters of faith. Also, that General Councils have erred and may err. Universal error, or liability to err in matters of faith, is thus defined as *de fide* by the Church of England. Hence she cannot claim anyone's assent to anything she herself propounds; for it may, on her own principles, be false. Hence it is not without significance that the Book of Common Prayer causes Anglicans to confess daily, not only that they have "offended against" God's laws, but also that they have "erred and strayed from His ways like lost sheep."

of former times ever thought of it. We have already seen that the earliest Christians were not Christians of this sort, formed on the teaching of books which were not as yet composed. They became Christians by listening to Jesus Christ and to His Apostles, and believing their word. If Jesus Christ is God, as Protestants believe Him to be, and if He willed that His history should be written, it is quite incredible that He should have permitted gaps and mistakes to occur in the different records made concerning Him. It is truly astonishing that He should not have left us some elaborate and sure method of criticism for deciding that Matthew was wrong on this point, and John right on that one, or that Luke alone is right and all the others wrong. It seems to us that it would have been a much more simple plan to have preserved them from error altogether. M. Rénan was very clear-sighted when he asserted—"Outside of the rigorous orthodoxy of all the Catholic centuries, I see nothing but the exercise of free-thought, after the manner of the eighteenth century."

If Jesus Christ is the Son of God, His history can be no indifferent matter. Nor can it be denied that, if there be any story of a life which God is bound to protect against contradiction and preserve from error, it is, above all, the history of His Only Begotten Son. To know whether Jesus wrought such or such a miracle, under such or such circumstances, cannot be a question of small importance. Such a statement that it is necessary St. John should correct St. Luke upon a vital fact is, at least, a strange one. This, however, is the reasoning of the greater number of Protestants. Some still hold to an absolute and rigid theopneusticism, as Catholics do—and these are consistent supernaturalists—but, in general, the most orthodox admit that there are characteristic errors in Scripture, even on important points, such as the date of the death of Jesus Christ, or points in the two genealogies of His line of descent. "Can we conceive the idea of a true Church," writes the Abbé de Broglie, "founded on the principle of dogmatic individualism; that is to say, having, as a rule of faith for all its members, the belief of primitive Christianity apart from criticism

and archæology, and having, for its Scriptural canon, a Bible abbreviated by the suppression of contested texts on the one side, and, on the other side, of all that could be attributed to the personal opinions of the Apostles? Is it not evident that in such a Church simple minds would have to receive their faith ready made from learned and critical men, as being alone capable of pronouncing upon a subject so difficult of approach?"[1] At first Protestants accepted literal inspiration. For many, the very punctuation and vowels were inspired! We may well accuse early Protestantism of Bibliolatry. In less than three hundred years our friends have arrived at the other end of the pole. At the present moment they are not sure whether anything at all in the Bible is inspired, and even, were this granted, they know not which passages are inspired. Independent criticism has brought them to this pass. In regard of the boldest among them the Bible has become little more than an immense collection of myths, respecting the interpretation of which endless debate arises.[2] The more logical reformers, in order to secure for themselves greater latitude, have maintained that "Protestantism derived its name from free examination and free discussion, in opposition to the authority of the Church"; and they ask—"Are we now to allow ourselves to be fettered by texts?" Lessing declared—"If our pastors are going to put a cord round our necks—if they want to impose their authority upon us—I, for one, will be the first to exchange all these would-be popes for the Pope of Rome." Finally, if a centre of authority actually exists, we must submit to it; but if it be built up only on texts capable of various meanings, it is a question which must be discussed. In a word, according to this manner of Christian belief, faith becomes merely what Strauss calls it, "a problem"; whereto he very justly adds—"But we cannot have faith in a problem."

[1] "L'individualisme dogmatique."

[2] In order to retain some title to the appellation "Christian," certain unbelieving sects assert that the whole Bible is little else than a collection of allegories and parables; that it is not to be understood literally, but in a figurative sense, according to the views of the persons regarded by those sects as competent interpreters.

Beyond all doubt, the principle of free interpretation is that which really condemns the reformed religionists to dogmatic impotence. The Gospels are, as it were, the depositories of truth upon earth, the truth as it came from the lips of Jesus. But does this fact bind us to assert that the text of these histories, the original of which has long been lost, is, as Protestants pretend, the sole foundation of Christianity? Were this so, then Jesus ought to have engraved His teachings upon tablets of brass. "If He wished His doctrine to be transmitted and preserved only by the reading of the Bible, why did He not write it Himself? Why did He not charge His Apostles to write it? Why did these write it so much later, and only on particular occasions? Why did they not all have a hand in writing it; why not at least the greater number of them? Why did our Saviour Himself establish oral teaching in His Church? How is it that He did not command every one to be taught to read? How came it to pass that Christians, who, if we may believe St. Irenæus, had in their many wanderings about, never even heard of the Holy Scriptures, yet continued to profess the true faith?"[1] However clear the doctrines taught by Jesus were, however powerful the voice of tradition concerning the origin of the Church, the text of the Gospels, alone, could never have sufficed to preserve the doctrine in its primitive integrity. All writing is a dead letter. We cannot question a book as we can a man. We cannot say to it, *Quid dicis de teipso?*—"What sayest thou of thyself?" Since a book cannot explain itself, in default of some living authority to interpret it, there will certainly arise occasion for divisions. The experience of eighteen centuries proves this. There is scarcely a single passage of the New Testament which has not been interpreted in the most opposite senses by various heretics. "Experience shows every day," says Mgr. Konrad Martin, "that the various interpreters, learned or ignorant, cannot agree upon even one passage, whilst each of them proclaims his own interpretation to be as

[1] See Mgr. de Kettuler, "Le Concile œcuménique," p. 62.

clear as the sun at noonday?"[1] Uselessly, indeed, would Christ have come to teach us in the name of God, if His word had been left at the free disposal of our errors and our passions. He could not have failed to invest His Apostles and their successors with infallible doctrinal authority, seeing that reason absolutely requires it. "Foolish is he," exclaims Plato in the "Phædo," "who thinks to hand on an art to posterity simply in a book. Foolish also is he who searches for it therein, as though written characters could transmit to his mind any clear and solid instruction. If despised or unjustly attacked, a book will ever require its author's help, for it can neither defend nor assist itself."[2]

It is a manifest and certain truth that Holy Scripture, without an infallible living authority to explain and interpret it, is a source of universal and permanent divisions. Before it can become a bond of unity, one of two things is necessary, viz., either that God should preserve from error every individual who studies it, or else that He should fore-arm, against all error, the Church which teaches it. Now, God does not preserve the individual readers of Scripture from error, since they each understand it differently, and it cannot have more than one true meaning. It is necessary, therefore, that the Spirit of God, who inspired the Bible, should spread Himself through the Church, ever animating and penetrating her through every part. "The text alone, without any guide," is the claim advanced by Protestant free-thought; whereas, "Doctrine, independent of any written book," is the character presented by the Christian Church, as she came forth from the hand of her Founder. In the cradle of the faith the subjects for examination — that is, the printed Gospel — were absent. In compensation for this want the basis of authority was all the more solidly laid. Who can fix the hour when the Church was old enough to walk without leading-strings? It is a strange thing for Protestantism to claim that she is a return to the condition and

[1] "La vie chrétienne," Chap. x.
[2] Plato, édit. Stalbaum, t. VIII., p. 65.

practice of the primitive Church. Nothing could less resemble them.

And now, how great are the difficulties which beset the exercise of free interpretation! It is requisite that each person should possess a knowledge of all the Scriptures in detail—should both read and understand them; yet the Scriptures are written in Hebrew, in Greek, and in Latin. The doctrine which they contain is taught in the form of memoirs and narratives without connection, and this connection has to be supplied. Many passages in Holy Writ are difficult, obscure, and ambiguous. What trouble of mind would not these cause, what an accumulation of mistakes. We have here a book, both Sacred and Divine, to which every Christian is bound to submit.[1] Yet we make ourselves the judges of such a Book as this. We summon, as it were, God Himself before a tribunal which we ourselves constitute.[2] If you reject tradition, we would say to Protestants, you have no right to believe in any Christianity at all. Christianity rests on tradition, not on texts. Texts may serve to defend Christianity against adverse criticism, but her great fortress does not lie there. The bulwark of Christianity is tradition. Luther condemned himself out of his own mouth when he wrote—"No one can understand the 'Bucolics' (Pastorals) of Virgil, unless he has five years' experience of shepherd life. No man is in a condition to comprehend the 'Georgics' of Virgil, without having been five years a field labourer. No man is, in my opinion, able to understand the Epistles of Cicero, without five years' previous experience in the affairs of State. So let no one imagine that he has sufficient understanding of Holy Scripture, until he has for a hundred years governed the Church

[1] The Church of England, in her nineteenth Article, defines "the visible Church of Christ" to be "a congregation of faithful men, in the which the pure Word of God is preached." But if a Church admits its teaching voice to be liable to err, it cannot logically maintain that, by its voice, only the "pure" Word—that is, the truth, and not falsehood—is preached. In the twentieth Article, the teaching voice of the Church is shown to be liable to err, for the Article declares that "it is not lawful for the Church to ordain anything that is contrary to God's Word written." Nothing reveals more clearly than this, that those who subscribe the thirty-nine Articles regard the Church as a merely human institution, and, therefore, liable to "ordain" falsehood.

[2] See Milner's "End of Controversy," and "Bishop Hay's Works," 5 vols.

along with the prophets—with Elias, Eliseus, and John the Baptist, with Jesus Christ and His Apostles. Without any further pretensions, then, let us fall down in adoration before the sayings of this divine Eneid. We are but as impostors; that is the simple truth."[1]

To proceed. If Jesus Christ founded a society, Protestantism cannot be that society under any title whatsoever. What social bond can exist among individuals, each of whom stands alone, with an equal right to discover in the Bible, *e.g.*, one man that Christ is God, another man that Christ is not God? This one decides that God exists in a Trinity of Persons; another that there are not three Persons, nor even one Person in God. And so on. How, we repeat, can there be a society formed of persons who are thus divided in opinion on even fundamental points of doctrine, without any one having authority to reduce them to unity? A society is not a simple aggregate of individuals, without any bond of union between them, without any hierarchy. Given the principle that, in matters of faith, each individual has no other judge than his own reason, it follows that he cannot be a member of any society that is exterior to himself, or to the exercise of his reason. He is in himself alone both society and church.[2] A church supposes community of ideas and sentiments. One can understand the existence of a creed in a society which has power to pass decisions that lay an obligation on the intellect: but, in a society which possesses no such living authority, the idea is incomprehensible. Certainty then becomes an impossibility to a conscientious mind. A sincere and educated Protestant sees in the Bible what another Protestant, equally sincere and educated, altogether fails to perceive there. How, in such a case, can either of them be sure that it is he who is right? In Protestantism it becomes very difficult for Christian faith to attain certitude, and this puts it very moderately. The faith of a Protestant must almost infallibly lack precision, a fact which presents a fatal obstacle to the energy of mind needed

[1] "Colloquia Lutheri," édit. de Frankfurt, p. 3.

[2] The late Mr. T. W. Marshall said that the Catholic Creed might be summed up in the words, "I believe in one Pope," and the non-Catholic Creed in the words, "Every man his own Pope."

for true certainty, since we can adhere with energy only to a precise and definite truth. The necessary disunion of minds, which results from free investigation, remains to an intelligent man an almost insurmountable difficulty. The Bible is especially well calculated to cause divisions, and, in point of fact, it has largely done this. What is there to save Protestantism from this principle of dissolution? Is it to be the teaching of Luther, or of Calvin, or the Confession of Augsburg, or the Westminster Confession, or the Six Articles of Henry VIII., or the later Thirty-nine Articles, or any other symbol of faith among the innumerable beliefs to which the Reformation has given birth? A consistent Protestant can be independent of Luther and Calvin, and of all Confessions; he remains free to affirm what they deny, or to deny what they affirm.

Perhaps some will ask—"What of the entire body of Christian pastors; have they no principle of unity amongst them?" Supposing, though in truth it is not the case, that there is some degree of doctrinal unity in the body of Protestant pastors taken together, either this body has a certain measure of authority, or it has none. If there resides in it no authority to impose an act of belief in any doctrine, no one is bound to believe in it. The attempt to exert such authority would be regarded as a jest and an absurdity. If, on the contrary, this body can speak authoritatively, what becomes of the fundamental principle of Protestantism? It would be a useless proceeding to break with the ancient authority of fifteen hundred years' duration, to fall under the yoke of a hierarchy which dates from yesterday and will disappear to-morrow.

The facts are at hand to prove our thesis. There is a double characteristic, a very striking one, by which we can easily detect that Protestantism could never have formed a society, and could never bear on its brow the guarantee of doctrinal unity. This twofold characteristic presents on the one side contradiction, on the other side variation. Our separated brethren may well call themselves by the generic name of "Protestant," for they are not united by the common bond of any one doctrine. There is not a single point of Revelation that is free from deep-seated divergen-

cies of opinion amongst them. A thousand conflicting sects rankle within the breast of "Protestantism," each one contending against and anathematising the other.[1] We shall treat here only of the three great sections of the Reformed Religion—the Lutheran, the Calvinistic, and the Anglican. Is not a constant and most determined opposition carried on between these? Luther admits the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist by consubstantiation; Calvin denies this. Luther acknowledges that the just can fall from the state of grace; Calvin affirms that grace, once received, can never be lost. Luther teaches that baptism is necessary for salvation; Calvin asserts that the children of believers are born in a state of sanctity and need no baptism. Anglicanism retains the episcopate as a Divine institution; Luther and Calvin both reject it. Anathemas are exchanged between these pretended reformers. According to Zwingle, Luther is "a seducer, worse than Marcion." In the eyes of Luther, Zwingle is an Antichrist. Henry VIII. curses Luther; Luther hurls against Henry epithets which no decent lips can repeat. With Calvin, Luther is a bad man who pursues his wicked inclinations. "The dogmas of Luther," said one of the most celebrated Calvinist ministers of the eighteenth century, "are impious; they tend towards Manicheism, and are destructive of true religion." Is it surprising that Melancthon, Luther's first disciple, should cry out in despair—"No! The Elbe, with all its waves, can never furnish us with water enough for tears to shed over our divided reform!" And Luther himself, towards the end of his life, made this avowal—"I must own that my doctrine has caused much scandal. Yes, I cannot deny it. Sometimes these things frighten me, especially when my conscience tells me that I have torn to pieces the former state of things in the Church, living so tranquilly and peaceably as she did under the papacy."[2]

[1] Article XVIII. of the Church of England anathematises those who reject the name of Christ. "They also are to be had accursed that presume to say," etc. And in Article XXXIII. it approves of excommunication for certain offences, and states that the excommunicate should be avoided, and regarded as "a Heathen and a Publican until he be openly reconciled by penance."

[2] Every one knows Luther's well-known expression—"My Pope, my little Popeling, you are an ass!" This no more proves the ignorance of Leo. X. than the falsity of Catholicism. A whole torrent of abuse is no substitute for even the weakest of arguments.

And what shall be said of the perpetual variations of Protestantism? Bossuet exposed them with singular skill, and his "l'Histoire des variations" is overwhelmingly conclusive against Protestantism. "It is," says M. Brunetière, "the severest criticism that the Reform has yet sustained." Bossuet's aim was to prove that Lutheranism resolves itself into Calvinism, Calvinism into Socinianism, Socinianism into Indifferentism, and Indifferentism into Atheism. Employing the evidence of texts and a close logical line of argument, Bossuet proves his point, and there is no escape from his conclusions. Beginning with the Lutheran body he lays bare the variations of its founder, showing how he at first timidly admitted the authority of the Church, then rejected it violently; how he at one time affirmed, at another denied it, according as the necessities of his cause or his own violent temperament urged him on. At one time he recognised only one sacrament, in his book on the "Captivity of Babylon"; later on three, and, finally, two. He shows that the "Confession of Augsburg" modified the original doctrine of Luther; then came the modification of the Confession itself, no less than five times, on the subject of the Lord's Supper. Again, Lutheranism changed from the "Augsburg Confession" to an apology for this Confession, and, finally, from the apology to the "Book of Concord" and the "Articles of Smalkalde." Passing on to Anglicanism, he shows how the Six Articles of Henry VIII. consummated the schism of England. These Articles were abolished under Edward VI., and gave place to other Articles which, after various changes, were adopted, and still actually express the legal belief of the Church of England; but they are subject to various conflicting interpretations. Taking Calvinism last, Bossuet compares the doctrines of Geneva with the catechism and confessions of France; he draws attention to its many points of divergence, and, after having passed under review all the Protestant symbols, creeds, and confessions, as they succeed and replace one another, he comes to the conclusion that the Reformation bears upon it the stamp of error, the character of variation, alongside of that contradiction and disunion. He predicts that it will perish by internal disintegration, and will end in absolute and universal

negation. After reading "l'Histoire des variations," any thoughtful man will exclaim—"Either the Christian religion is an illusion, or Catholicism is the true Christianity."[1] What would Bossuet now say, could he return among us, and have the proof before him that the Reformation has not allowed three centuries to elapse ere she has run through the whole of this fatal cycle? Those who belong to the strictly Protestant school have retained scarcely anything of the faith of their fathers. From having had at least something definite as a confession of faith in the beginning of its career, Protestantism now professes to abide by the simple "Scriptures." In this lies a complete revolution, and the cause of its doctrinal collapse. At present it resembles a corpse in a state of decomposition. Its contradictions and variations make, day by day, unconscious confession of this, and sects are multiplied *ad libitum*. There are Lutherans, Calvinists, Anglicans, Baptists, Anabaptists, Socinians, Quakers, Presbyterians, Wesleyans, Unitarians, Jumpers, Puseyites, Shakers, Mormons, Swedenborgians, Glassites, Salvationists, Independents, Peculiar People, Irvingites, Christadelphians, Bible Christians, and many others. The different sects are in a perpetual state of formation, revision, reformation, and dissolution. Each sect that has left the Catholic Church seems to have conferred upon its members the right of separating from itself in turn.

The Church of England is composed of the High, the Broad, and the Low Church parties. This Church, being established, is the only sect that presents a certain exterior unity; it is the State Church, and each of its ministers is bound to subscribe the Thirty-nine Articles.

[1] M. Brunetière declares that he knows no book like it in all literature. There is everything in the "Variations": dialectics, portraiture, moral analysis, the philosophy of the causes of the Reformation, etc. M. Rébelliau, who also studied the work, was astonished at the number of documents collected by Bossuet, at his historic sense, and at his impartiality. He asks what sort of book Bossuet would write if he lived in an age like ours. Read also "Avertissements aux protestants," and the two pastoral instructions on "Les Promesses faites à l'Église," where Bossuet demonstrates that the texts appealed to by Catholicism cannot be interpreted in any other sense than its own. From an historical point of view the three volumes of Döllinger, "La Réforme et son développement intérieur," and the work of Janssen, "l'Histoire du peuple allemand," prove plainly that Protestantism is false and does not represent true Christianity.

A common question in England is—"To what denomination do you belong?" the exercise of private judgment on such questions being regarded as a matter of course.

Père Didon, during his travels some years since through Germany, gave the following account of the state of religion in that country—"In the Protestant schools of teaching, dogma seemed to me to be wholly given up to fluctuation and doubt. It differed in every university, and often within one and the same college. The various conferences endeavoured, though in vain, to hold consistently to their own standard of orthodoxy. The professor regulated his liberty of thought on the one principle of not irritating public opinion, in which he could always succeed, provided he set up a formula wherein the very foundations of the Christian faith are reduced to the most diminutive proportions."[1] Dutch Protestantism similarly tends to Rationalism. Fifteen hundred Dutch ministers, out of a total of eighteen hundred, actually congratulated Rénan on the appearance of his blasphemous "Vie de Jésus." Protestants in Switzerland are alike in a state of confusion. Every variety of religious system is to be found in the town of Geneva, and Swiss Calvinism has been everywhere much altered.

The liberal Christians of France, among whom are Coquérel and Fontanes, scarcely believe in a personal God. At the Synod of 1872 M. Guizot was obliged to retire, because he demanded that the Divinity of Jesus should be laid down in formal terms in the synodal profession of faith.[2] The majority of the members of the Synod, including even M. Coquérel, pronounced it to be "an enormity to assert that Jesus taught eternal punishment." They declared, indeed, that it was necessary to acknowledge the sovereign authority of the Scriptures in matters of faith; but they separated without having been able to formulate a common belief, or to agree on one single point, not even on the Divinity of Christ, the immortality of the soul, or scriptural inspiration. Félix Pécau went so far as to contest the absolute and strict impeccability

[1] "Les Allemands," p. 241.

[2] This Synod was held in the Temple of St. Honoré, Rue Roc-Épine, Paris. Read, in *Le Correspondant*, the article by Mgr. Perraud on "Le synode des Églises réformées de France," July, 1872.

of Jesus Christ. As for American Protestantism, it is known to all that it is more completely divided than any other, and that it gives birth, almost daily, to some new Christian, or rather anti-Christian, sect.

These sects possess neither unity of faith, nor combined action, nor an authority common to all. Being without a priesthood, they have almost entirely given up ritual observances.[1] Nor do these kaleidoscopic reforms really hold to the teaching of Christ. The terminology employed by all these Protestants may be the same, or nearly so, but the words, as a matter of fact, bear a different signification in each sect. There is among them all the same talk of "the word of God, Divine inspiration, prophecies, miracles, sin, salvation, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour," etc.; but the greater number of Protestants make use of these expressions with a sort of mental translation of their own, in order to reduce their meaning to what M. Schérer calls, "the *caput mortuum* of positive dogmas." St. Paul tells us that Christ is not divided; "The Son of God, who was preached among you by us, . . . was not It is, and It is not, but It is was in Him" (2 Cor. i. 19). Protestantism is no longer a religion. It is scarcely even a school of philosophy or of Christian morality; there are in it the vestiges of great beauty, but these have no sound metaphysical basis. Truth is departing from it; the casket is broken. At this hour Protestantism has no more rational existence or dogmatic consistency than Islamism. It is a body without a backbone. The Protestant sects influence each other only by juxtaposition and mutual friction, like the cellular systems of some of the inferior animals which are not attached to any nervous centre. Protestantism is a building without cement, which is held together by the mere weight and pressure of times and circumstances, sustained as these are by powerful interests, and buttressed by passions now grown old and hard. M. Guyau, an infidel philosopher, has described very vividly the decomposition

[1] In England and America the "Catholic Apostolics," or Irvingites, and certain sections of the Swedenborgians, have adopted some ceremonial observances. The former use vestments, incense, and holy water, as do many of the Anglican Ritualists.

now taking place in the heart of Protestantism.[1] According to the Abbé de Broglie, Protestantism is now "an evacuated Christianity, or a door thrown open for escape from it."[2] Thus, after having accused the Church of "obscurantism," the Protestants are reduced to the last extremity, and being forced to eliminate from their religion almost every intellectual element, they have reduced it to a vapid sentimentality, stripped of all definite aim or object. But one alternative is left them, either to rise to the level of Catholicism, or to fall down headlong into rationalism. This is the confession of one of their number in a recent article on Manning—"A nature so hungering after truth and reality, as was Manning's, could never be contented with the crude nourishment of Protestantism. He began to feel that the very half-truths which he still possessed, the half-certainties which detained him in Anglicanism, beckoned him on to whole truths and perfect certainties, and that if he did not go on to the end he would lose the little he still had."[3]

Furthermore, the canon of Scripture, according to the true sense of the word, is an impossibility in a Protestant system. Scripture without tradition loses half its force, and Protestants do not admit that Divine guidance is granted to any particular Church. If they are right in this, how can they know whether such or such a book

[1] "L'irréligion de l'avenir," pp. 133, 134.

[2] In the Parliament of Religions at Chicago, the capitulations of progressive Protestantism were truly deplorable. "In labouring for the salvation of the world," said the Rev. Duke M'Fadden, "we must first try to destroy creeds. The world is in division not because of God, but because of creeds." The Rev. W. Alger, of Boston, discussing how religious unity could be realised, declared that it would be by "Christianity without Christ."

[3] F. de Pressensé, *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1st May, 1896. French, German, and Dutch Protestantism are similar in their tenets to English Unitarianism. The Episcopal Lutherans of Sweden and Norway are said to retain a more orthodox faith; nevertheless, Emmanuel Swedenborg, who was the son of a Swedish Lutheran Minister, and who died a member of that denomination, left a mass of manuscript, which has since been published by those who have adopted his theories. From this it is apparent that, as Emmanuel Swedenborg was not excluded from membership with the Lutheran sect, his opinions were not regarded by it as heterodox, although he denies the doctrine of the Trinity; asserts that Jesus Christ is God the Father; maintains that baptism should be administered "in the name of Jesus," instead of according to the form instituted by Him; and regards the historical portions of much of the Old Testament and certain parts of the New as merely allegorical or figurative. These opinions have given rise to a fresh sect styling itself the "New Jerusalem Church," in which Swedenborg is reverenced as a "seer" of almost equal rank with the prophets and the Apostles.

forms part of the canon of the inspired books, since the most ancient official decision on the point dates from the fourth century, and was pronounced by those whom they regard as fallible men?[1] Protestants have, however, invented a variety of systems of their own. They argue that you can distinguish an inspired from an uninspired book, as you might savoury from unsavoury food, by its flavour—an explanation which implies "Illuminism." When we read Ecclesiastes or the Canticle of Canticles we are not, at first sight, disposed to recognise their inspiration. Some of the marvellous facts recounted in the Old Testament read very much like legends: such as the story of the Tower of Babel, for instance, or that of Samson, or the madness of Nabuchodonosor. It might be asked, could not Protestants decide the canon for themselves solely out of Scripture testimony? We answer, they could not do so without finding themselves enclosed in a vicious circle. The books of Scripture cannot, any more than other books, bear witness in their own favour, unless it is otherwise demonstrated that their authors were inspired. But such testimony is forthcoming only in the case of the Apostles. On this ground, therefore, Protestants could admit as canonical the writings of the Apostles alone, and such books as are declared by them to contain the Word of God. Besides these, certain books are recognised by Protestants as deutero-canonical, which are not included as inspired in their Bibles; and, on the other hand, there are books recognised by the Church, but rejected by some Protestants, which are included in all their Bibles.[2]

[1] The Muratorian Canon (about A.D. 180) provides the earliest formal list of the New Testament books. It omits James, Hebrews, and 2 Peter. The Peshito, or Syriac, version dates from the third century, and it omits Jude, 2 and 3 Ep. John, and the Apocalypse. Pope St. Innocent I., in A.D. 403, ratified the full list of the New Testament books, which had been decided to form the canon by the Council of Carthage in A.D. 398. The Councils of Florence and Trent, in their decrees, finally settled all doubts as to the New Testament canon.

[2] The Council of Jerusalem, in 1672, drew up a list of the canonical books for the Greek schismatical Church. It agrees with the Catholic canon. The Scotch Presbyterians do not, like Lutherans and Anglicans, retain the "Apocrypha," even as deutero-canonical, but in their "Confession of Faith" they place it on a level with any other human writings. Luther, and some other sectaries, rejected the deutero-canonical books of the New Testament, or some of them, *e.g.*, Hebrews, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 Ep. John, James, Jude, and the Apocalypse. On the other hand, some sects base their pretensions on their private interpretation of the last named, especially the Irvingite community and the Swedenborgians.

Let us suppose that Protestants take their stand on clear proofs of the authenticity, integrity, and veracity of the books of the Old and the New Testaments. Such evidence may prove the high historical value of these books, but not their canonicity. If they were to have recourse to the catalogues of the Scriptures found in the writings of the Fathers, or to those given by the Councils of the first four centuries, this would be fruitless, for, in the first place, these monuments of antiquity are of no value except as witnesses to the apostolic tradition, and Protestantism totally rejects tradition as a part of the Rule of Faith. Secondly, if Protestants adopted those primitive catalogues, they would find therein indicated, as forming part of the inspired Scripture, the very books which they obstinately reject. Thirdly, among the ancient catalogues divergences abound. Some include more books than the Council of Trent admits, some fewer; and all differ in this respect among themselves. Protestantism must, therefore, either adopt the Canon of Trent or have none at all. And yet they may not, logically, adopt the Canon of the Catholic Church, for in their view the authority of the Church is purely human. Sound criticism may drove the high historical value of the books contained in the Canon of Trent, but it will not prove their inspiration, though Divine sanction does exist, it is true, for such books as are formally cited or designated by our Lord Jesus Christ or by His Apostles. Such testimony, however, does not exist for the others, to which no reference was made by them. On what grounds, for example, do Protestants retain in their Bibles the Gospels of St. Mark and St. Luke and the Acts? Is it because their authors were disciples of the Apostles? Or is it because their doctrine is conformable to the apostolic doctrine? If so, they are bound to regard, as equally authoritative, the authentic and orthodox writings of St. Clement and St. Polycarp, who were, likewise, disciples of the Apostles. They should add, moreover, the Epistle of St. Barnabas, a disciple of Jesus Himself, called also an Apostle by the most ancient of the Fathers.

Catholics have a testimony both certain and divine for recognising the canonicity of the books enumerated by the Council of Trent. This we possess in the infallible word of the Apostles, certified by the infallible authority of the Catholic Church. It is true this apostolic testimony has not been pronounced regarding all the apostolic writings, but only in the instance of a few; yet it equally exists for all the rest, as is proved by the very necessity of the case. If this testimony be not found in the apostolic writings, evidently it has been transmitted to us by tradition. We explain this in the following words of St. Augustine—"As for me, I should not believe the Gospel if I were not convinced of its truth by the authority of the Catholic Church."[1] The learned doctors of the fourth century acknowledge the greater part of the books contained in our canon to be inspired. They were single-hearted men of faith, piety, and learning, and as they believed in inspiration, it was in virtue of a well-founded tradition. Catholics alone can lay claim to this principle of guidance. The inspiration of Scripture is a different question from that of its beauty or its historical value. An infallible authority to pronounce upon such a matter is a necessity. The Catholic Church teaches that God, the Spirit of Truth, animates His Church, and that those who in this Church have authority to decide such questions can do so unerringly by His power and aid. "Outside the Roman Catholic Church there is no canon," said M. Réville, the celebrated Protestant minister. He points this out to the members of his communion who desire to adhere to the canon.[2]

The question of the canon of Scripture is one of those points on which Catholicism is most invulnerable. No discussion that has ever taken place on this subject has been so solid and so well sustained as the controversy between Bossuet and Leibnitz. Leibnitz tried to prove to Bossuet that he could not become a Catholic because the Council of Trent had registered in the canon certain books, called deutero-canonical, and this,

[1] "Contra epist. fund.," Chap. v.
[2] See *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1864.

according to him, the Council ought not to have done, the canonicity of these books not dating from the beginning of the Church. In replying vigorously to this objection, Bossuet does not invoke the infallibility of the Church. He places himself on the same ground as Leibnitz, and appeals from it to history and to criticism. According to Bossuet, it is not to be supposed that God would have left His Church in error for fourteen centuries on a point of so great importance, the Holy Books being one of the bases of Christian faith. It cannot, therefore, be questioned that tradition is essential in the Church. She has always made it her glory to ignore nothing of the past in matters which she considers to be vital, and a very strong argument results from this fact. Pope Gelasius, at the end of the fourth century, formulated, but did not invent, the official list of the books which were regarded as sacred in the Church. By this fact alone it can be proved that Pope Gelasius had in his official list such and such books; and, as evidence that the Church rested on tradition in the matter, it is proved in an unanswerable manner that the canon dates back traditionally to the commencement of the Church. Bossuet said, in substance, to Leibnitz—"Even were there, in your reasoning, any specious arguments which I was unable to answer, I should not be the least shaken in my belief in the canon, because on this point we have an incontestable tradition, which descends from the end of the fourth century, and which supposes consequently a former canon descending from a still earlier age. You will never make me believe that God would have allowed His Church to go astray afterwards on so capital a point as this of the canon. If you are right, then all Christianity is wrong. You were born yesterday; you cannot claim a well-authenticated relationship with any Christian sect that was contemporary with Jesus Christ or the Apostles. If your attacks against the Church are well-founded, we are wrong; but then, remember you are wrong along with us, and Christianity is nothing whatever but a fable. You cannot destroy us without destroying yourselves at the same time."

Bossuet was victorious in this discussion, which he finished by a shout of triumph. No other man has been known to build his faith on tradition so completely as Bossuet did. Against all the trickery of libertinism—as free-thought in the seventeenth century was termed—and against that of Protestantism, Bossuet unceasingly opposes the fact of seventeen centuries of uninterrupted Catholic tradition. For him, Catholic tradition was like the sun in space. There may be clouds here and there, but still the sun shines and cannot be touched.

The question of the canon, then, is disastrous for Protestantism, and their knowledge of the fact has led many Protestants to become Rationalists. M. Godet, one of the most learned and sincere of orthodox Protestants, makes the following avowal:—"The Council of Trent in its session of 8th April, 1546, quickly stamped out the inanity of independent criticism by sanctioning the Divine authority of the whole canon of the New Testament, such as it has been received in the Church since the end of the fourth century."[1] From a Catholic point of view, as well as from that which seems most reasonable, this is decisive.

The conception formed of Jesus Christ by a great number of Protestants suggests another argument, which overthrows the entire Protestant system from its very base. The Christology of the Reformers is very obscure, and lacks the precision and definiteness of that of Catholics. Certain Protestants hold that Jesus acquired knowledge according to His growth; they would have Him become perfect by degrees. Others suppose that the Divinity was not possessed by Christ in its completeness until after His Resurrection. In the eyes of these Jesus was not pre-existent; according to the former, He obliterated Himself when He came down upon earth.[2] Such a theory closely approximates the system of the Gnostics, who said that the

[1] "Les Épîtres de Saint Paul," p. 34.

[2] This view refers to the κένωσις (the self-emptying of our Lord)—Philip. ii. 6, 7. With regard to many Protestants, it is useless to ask them whether Christ existed eternally with His Father, or one nature was absorbed in the other, or Christ had only one will which governed all, or whether He had two wills, one contradicting the other? These questions are of Eastern origin.

Christos, a celestial Eon, was united to Jesus on the day of His baptism. It almost re-echoes the words of Arius to the bishops—"You would, then, have me acknowledge an infant of three months old as God?" It is better to believe in nothing rather than to attribute to Jesus a development of the Divinity in His soul, or an exaltation after His death which would render Him equal to the Father. Doubtless, "Jesus increased in wisdom and age"—*Jesus crescebat sapientia et ætate;* that is to say, He submitted to the law of normal development that He might conceal the great mystery of His Being. That Jesus should not act as God before His public mission, that He should even ask questions of those around Him, is not surprising. "My hour is not yet come," He said one day to His Blessed Mother. Such an utterance is fully explanatory of His conduct on this point. Even during His public ministry, He revealed Himself by degrees, and this was a wise course. Had Jesus, before He wrought a single miracle, called Himself the Son of God, He would assuredly have been regarded as insane. The true concept of Jesus Christ implies that in Him the Divinity constantly directed the action of the Humanity. The Protestant concept is incomprehensible. Newman maintained that "very few Protestants acknowledged Jesus to be God in a distinct and absolute sense." Protestantism, with this inadequate idea of Jesus Christ, finds itself driven not merely to humanise the sublime dogma of the Incarnation, but also greatly to weaken its own proofs of the existence of the supernatural in Jesus Christ. In fact, the greater the certainty that the dogma of the unity of Person in the duality of the Divine and human natures is a fundamental dogma, the more inconceivable is it that such a dogma could ever have, humanly speaking, been accepted. Were certain unbelievers absolutely convinced that Christianity was really preached and founded on the "absurdity" of an Incarnate God, as Catholics understand it, they would fully admit that such a doctrine could never, without supernatural aid, have been received among men. If Arius had succeeded in imposing his heresy upon the world, Christianity would probably have disappeared by this time. It might be

said, "Christianity is but a system of philosophy; Jesus was not so great a man as Moses." Or, again, Christianity lives on only because we believe that God, and not a deified person, was its Founder.

On the other hand, the Christology of the Apostolic Fathers and writers of the first centuries was altogether different from that of Protestantism. If ever there were men—we speak from a purely human point of view—who ought to have been well informed concerning the faith of primitive Christianity, the early Fathers were such men. They certainly were better possessed of their subject than a critic of the nineteenth century. The first Christians were not Arians; Jesus was to them the Son of God. The author of the Epistle of St. Barnabas calls Him "the Son of God, the Saviour of all things, who shall one day judge both the living and the dead."[1] St. Clement of Rome writes—"He is the Son of God, and the angels are His ministers."[2] St. Ignatius of Antioch says—"There is but one God, who manifested Himself by Jesus Christ His Son, His Eternal Word."[3] He further calls him ὁ Θεὸς ἡμῶν—"Our God." "I glorify Jesus Christ—τόν Θεόν—the God."[4] Nowhere can we find, in these authors, that He became God; but, as St. Justin Martyr says—"He is God, He was God, and He will be always God."[5] Again—"He is the Word, the first-born of the Father, and also God."[6] The belief of Christians in the Divinity of Jesus Christ was so general in the second century, that it is attested for us by the very pagans. Pliny the younger, in a letter to Trajan, writes that the Christians "addressed hymns to Christ as to God."—*carmenque Christo quasi Deo dicere secum invicem.*[7] And Hadrian says, when writing to Servian, that they "adored Christ as God." A little later, Lucian of Samosata reproaches them with adoring "a crucified sophist"—with living according to His laws, and with considering Him as their God and their

[1] N. vii.
[2] "Ep.," N. xxvi.
[3] "Magn.," viii.
[4] "Ep. in tit," et N. xv., xviii.; "Rom. in tit," et N. iii.
[5] "Dial.," ii. 58.
[6] "Apol.," I., No. 63.
[7] "Ep.," Lib. X. xcvii.

Legislator.[1] Celsus, likewise, reproached them in the same terms as he reproached Jesus Christ Himself for being called God. The first Christians seemed scarcely to think of God the Father; they spoke always of Jesus Christ as one "who knows everything, who will judge them, and recompense them." They all believed that Jesus Christ was God, and wholly God. This conviction could alone explain their enthusiasm. The Christology of St. Paul, especially, is absolutely incompatible with the theistical Protestant theory. Those, whether of strict views or liberal, who entertain this strange idea of Jesus Christ, use the Christology of St. Paul as a weapon against himself. Without having any historical grounds to go upon, they refuse to recognise certain Epistles of St. Paul as authentic, simply because these Epistles are clearly opposed to their theories. The first Protestants were far from forming such a conception of Jesus Christ. Can we understand the second Person of the Blessed Trinity coming in the Person of Jesus, and not enlightening His intelligence, but leaving Him in that state of intellectual inferiority wherein His fellow-men grovelled? How singular an alliance of the Divinity with the humanity would that have been. In a mystery like this we must accept all or nothing. The remedy must be either received whole, as it is by Catholics, or cast utterly away, as has been done by all unbelievers in all ages.

The principle of free investigation, then, is the source of all past and present variations in the Protestant Churches, and of all the contradictions with which these Churches are so fatally beset. Protestantism cannot stand much longer on such insecure ground, undermined as it is by three centuries of controversy. Private judgment is a canker-worm that devours it piece by piece and condemns it to utter dissolution.

> A knot untied will loosen all the work,
> And make it float in air, a shapeless thing.

"I am thoroughly convinced," says de Maistre, "and I wish I could convince others also, that without the

[1] "De morte Peregrini," 13. "Orig. contra Celsum," Lib. I., Nos. 28, etc.

Sovereign Pontiff there is no true and complete Christianity; and that no honest Christian, separated from the Pope, can, with the slightest consideration for his honour, subscribe, if he has any knowledge on the point, a profession of faith clearly defined." An Anglican does not think as a Lutheran does, nor as a Genevese Protestant.[1] There is the Christianity of Guizot, of Pressensé, of Schleiermacher, of Channing, of Clamageran, of Godet, of Colani, of Pécau, of Chapuis, etc. One view insists that the Christ was not miraculously born; another that He performed no miracles. A third considers Him merely as an ambassador from God; and another rejects eternal punishment—and so on. Protestantism is truly a Tower of Babel. Thus, the dogma of the presence of two natures in the mystery of the Incarnation, as defined by the Council of Nicea, is now rejected by nearly all Protestants.

To repeat a strong argument—If the Bible has not been transmitted by an authority which God has protected against error how can it be known that the Bible contains God's Revelation? If we had nothing but the study of the Scriptures to go upon, we should never know what we ought to believe about Jesus Christ. From a logical point of view, Protestantism has the slenderest claims of any upon our adhesion. We can understand a man becoming a Catholic through the influence of a tradition lasting for nineteen hundred years; but we cannot comprehend a Protestant being convinced who denies tradition. Such a man would be one easily satisfied.[2] Beyond the limits of the Roman Church, Christianity becomes a labour of paring and pruning; or we may liken it to the practice of assaying

[1] In England we may here give the names of a few representative Protestants, who have very little in common save the principle of private judgment and dislike of Catholicism:—Dr. James Martineau, the Socinian; Dr. Cumming, the Presbyterian; Dr. Parker, the Independent; Mr. Spurgeon, the Baptist; Mr. Haweis, the Broad Churchman; Dr. King, the High Church Bishop; Dr. Ryle, the Low Church Bishop; and "Father Ignatius," the Ritualistic "monk." Our list could be extended indefinitely.

[2] Great allowance must be made for the traditional prejudices and misapprehensions existing in countries in which Catholicism is but little known, and is generally regarded with dislike and suspicion. See Newman's "Present Position of Catholics in England."

for the extraction of gold from quartz, leaving in this case scarcely a particle of truth to be rescued from the vast mass of uncertainty surrounding it. The more logical alternative would be to abandon Christianity altogether, if the difficulties appear to us unanswerable; but then this would not lead us nearer to the "unearthed cross" of Calvary, of which the Protestant Bungener speaks.[1] If once we leave the bark of Peter, we may say with the unfortunate Palinurus—"I am now on the high seas, and the winds toss me about in sport from wave to shore, and from shore to wave again." The religion of many Protestants is reduced to a veritable parrot-like religious chatter. It consists in a ceaseless repetition of the words "Christ" and the "Bible," without taking the trouble to think over what they mean, or what dogma is expressed by them. "To be Catholic or Apostolic without being Roman is an ideal more fascinating than it is attainable," says the learned Abbé Duchesne.[2]

Admitting, as both Catholics and Protestants do, the existence of a revealed religion, confirmed by Holy Scripture, the dogmas, miracles, and mysteries of which require the submission of our reason, it is evident that the guardianship and guidance of such teaching could not be left to the fluctuations and contradictions of the human mind. Revealed religion involves the continual intervention of a Divinely-constituted and Divinely-protected body, whose authority is admitted by the mass of the faithful. By granting to every one a power which he cannot possess, Protestants place a man either on the brink of rationalism, should he submit his faith to reason, or of individualism, should he reject this or that point, according to his peculiar turn of mind. We see herein an "absurd and undulating system," as Leo XIII. called it when he was Archbishop of Perugia.[3]

[1] "Rome et le cœur humain."

[2] Page 85, "Origines du culte chrétien." The various forms of English Protestantism usually appropriate certain texts which appear to support their respective theories, and these they quote continually. For example, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life," is supposed to signify that those who believe in the Gospel narrative are *ipso facto* saved without further effort.

[3] "Lettre sur l'Église catholique."

"I describe as very inconsequent and as somewhat childish," said the late Duc de Broglie, "that sort of Protestantism which consists in holding the Gospel to be true merely on moral and sentimental grounds, while it turns its eye away from every other argument, without examining, admitting, or rejecting it. In this method it seems to me there is no manliness, dignity, nor solid reasonable security. I said so to my brother-in-law when he consulted me on his perplexities. There can be no middle course, I said to him; you must either become, like me, a Christian philosopher, very sad at getting no further, or you must be like your sister, a Christian for good and all. Either the Gospel is Divine or it is not. If it is Divine, it is in every respect true; if it is not Divine, then there is no truth in it at all."[1]

Protestants forget that this tree of authority, to the root of which they apply the axe, is an offshoot from the tree of the Cross. This is the explanation of their decadence. Not merely rationalistic science, but even Protestant science has undermined its own two pivots of support, as most of them acknowledge. And hence arises the anxious distress of some of the more noble souls amongst them. Listen to the troubled voice of the son of one of the most scientific and critical Protestants of the day. "Protestantism," says M. Francis de Pressensé, "rested on two principles—the Divine inspiration of the Bible, and justification by faith in Jesus our Saviour. Each word of the Holy Books was the word of God, and the Saviour was, in all truth, the Eternal Son of God made man. But, at this day, what has Protestantism done with these two fundamental truths? Who now admits the Divine inspiration of the Sacred Books? Christ is no more than a purely human being. His Divinity, if the expression be even used at all, means no more than His sanctity and moral perfection. All that remains to guide Protestants is the individual conscience, wherein comes that state of decay which is ever manifesting itself more and more. That which the conscience of such men as Newman and Manning has readily accepted, cannot be declared by any one *à priori* false. When we see men

[1] "Souvenirs du feu Duc de Broglie," pp. 179, 180, 181.

of such undeniable piety and learning throw themselves into the arms of the Roman Church, how shall we dare to blame them?"[1] The very difficulty which these great minds must have encountered in acknowledging that they were vanquished only enhances the merit as well as the significance of their avowal.[2]

Catholicism, on the contrary, possesses that which is wholly wanting in all Protestant sects. She can firmly establish the moral formation of her children upon incontrovertible dogma, and she can, without effort, maintain unity amongst her members. It is this exactly that distinguishes the Catholic Church from the numerous sects which have sprung from the heresies of Luther, Cranmer, and Calvin. If the Church is Divine she must be infallible, and she cannot yield upon any vital point. All or nothing, is the only logical conclusion. "The Church is a bar of iron," said M. Rénan, and Strauss recognised the same, when towards the end of his life he wrote the curious brochure entitled, *Die halben und die ganzen*—"All or nothing." "I see very well," he wrote, "that the doctrine of Infallibility must be accepted, if once we admit a Divine intervention," while he laughs at those who will take only a small dose of the supernatural, which he calls a "philosophy that borrows its crutches from religion."

The Catholic Church alone is inflexibly consequent. Outside her pale, when religious questions are treated, no one dare speak with certainty. "It seems to me," says E. Rod, "that if I could once bring myself to make the act of submission of will which supposes faith, I would cast myself on the guidance of the Church, so as to

[1] "Conférences données à Lausanne," 12th Feb., 1894.

[2] The Tractarian movement is well known. It was one in which Manning, Newman, Ward, Wilberforce, and many other remarkable Anglicans took part (1833-1843), and which led many of them on to Catholicism. By studying the tradition of the first five ages of the Church, they discovered that the Christian society of those early ages strongly resembled the Roman Church. They found that they could no longer proclaim the authority of the Church of the early centuries or of the great Ecumenical Councils as a proof either of the ecclesiastical defection of the Middle Ages or of the errors of the Council of Trent. The Archbishop of Canterbury, terrified at this, sent forth a mandate censuring the movement, which was a declaration of war. He finished his warning by these words, soon to be verified daily—*Tendimus in Latium!*

annihilate myself in the complete sacrifice of my reason. But this argumentative religion, this compromise between dogma and common sense, which is so miserably weak both in dialectics and exegesis, the chilling worship of which consists in nothing but everlasting talk, so fragile in tissue that a child could tear it, this religion which prefers to wrangle rather than to love, and which splits itself into mutually embittered sects over some text of the Apocalypse—I, for one, will have none of it."[1]

II.

It now remains for us to examine the Origin of the Photian Churches,[2] and to prove that they do not present the characteristic marks or distinguishing notes of the true Church of Jesus Christ. Protestantism is the radical denial of Catholicism. It stands to the extreme left. The Photian Churches are neither Catholic nor Protestant, they occupy a middle position. They do not admit a living and infallible authority in the interpretation of Scripture, on which point they resemble Protestants. But they approve Catholicism in this, that they accept the authority of early tradition, and even sustain its claims with a vehemence which is almost extravagant.

The point at issue is this. Jesus Christ did not found several Churches—*Credo in unam . . . Ecclesiam*—"I believe in One Church." Such are the words publicly and solemnly pronounced by all Christians—Russian, Greek, Syrian, Anglican, and Catholic. All believe in One Church. It remains to be seen whether the Oriental Churches are this One Church. We may begin by stating that we can name the day and the hour of the separation of the Photian Churches, a fact which proves at once that these Churches are not apostolic, and do not, therefore,

[1] "Le sens de la vie," p. 275. Cardinal Newman wrote of the Anglican Book of Common Prayer—"The Prayer Book makes me shiver, and the Thirty-nine Articles make me shudder."

[2] By this term we designate the dissident Churches of the various Oriental rites, such as the Russo-Greek, the Greek Orthodox, Armenian, Bulgarian, Nestorian, Coptic, etc. All of these have retained the Apostolical Succession, together with belief in the Eucharistic Sacrifice, the Real Presence, and so forth, unlike the Anglican Church which, like all other sects of Protestants, has not a valid apostolical ministry.

belong to authentic Christianity. Peter fixed his See at Rome,[1] but to facilitate the administration of the spreading Church, he founded also the Sees of Antioch and Alexandria. The two Patriarchs of those Sees have governed their patriarchates in the name of the Sovereign Pontiff from time immemorial. The cause of the religious separation of the East from the West was the rivalry which arose, in the fourth century, between ancient Rome—which Constantine had ceded to the Pope—and Constantinople, the new Rome. Certain titular Bishops of Byzantium began to adopt the title of "ecumenical" or "universal Patriarch," a title against which the Popes never ceased to protest. To this dualism, a consequence of the policy of the Emperors, must be added the difference in the liturgies, which became more and more accentuated.[2] Yet, in spite of powerful national and political motives for separation, union between the two Churches subsisted until the eleventh century, except during a few brief periods of schism. This forms one of the strongest historical arguments in proof that the unity of the Church and the primacy of the See of Rome were, from the beginning of the Church, fundamental points of Catholic tradition. The Greeks themselves, for several centuries past, have indirectly recognised the primacy of Rome by constantly treating with the Popes on the subject of their reconciliation. Twice, first at Lyons in 1270, then at Florence in 1439, they were solemnly re-united to the See of Rome. Powerful external influences and a new political situation led to a fresh separation after the Council of Florence. But no official act of this new schism has ever been published, so that the present separation is one only of fact, not of formal consummation.

As regards Russia, it is known that she was won to the Catholic faith, by missionaries sent from Constantinople,

[1] See "St. Peter, Bishop of Rome," by the Rev. T. Livius, C.S.S.R.

[2] This difference is not doctrinal, but rubrical and ceremonial. The Roman Church has always admitted ceremonial variations, which are matters of detail of secondary importance. In Rome, particularly at the College of the Propaganda, a great variety of rites may be seen. The Catholic Easterns have always retained their own liturgical customs with the sanction of the Holy See, together with certain disciplinary differences from the Western Church, such as marriage among the secular clergy, the use of leavened bread in the mass, etc.

more than a century before the definitive separation of the Patriarchate from the Roman See.[1] When the separation took place Russia, which had no grievance against Rome, remained in union with her; and it was not till much later, at a period which it is difficult to determine, that she was dragged into the schism, one might almost say without her own knowledge. She took part in the Act of Union at Florence, her Patriarch, Isidore, signing it. The present schism having taken place, Peter the Great seriously thought of re-uniting the Russian Church with Rome, and he would doubtless have done this had the Pope conceded to him the solicited title of Emperor; but the Holy Father not seeing fit to satisfy this desire, Peter "modified," in an important fashion, the Church of Russia, as to her hierarchy and her government. As he feared the growing influence of the Patriarch of Moscow, he abolished that supreme dignity, and the government of the Church of Russia passed into the hands of the Holy Synod, an institution altogether new, the founder of which, Théophanes Procopovitch, was imbued with Calvinistic ideas.

"It is common enough," said de Maistre,[2] "to hear in conversation the Russian Church identified with the Greek Church, but this is evidently a mistake. The Russian Church formed at first, it is true, a province of the Greek Patriarchate; but in her case, as in that of all non-Catholic Churches, the force of circumstances has necessitated dependence on the temporal power. Thus

[1] Russia was officially declared to be Christian in 988, under Wladimir, seventy-six years before the date of the consummation of the Eastern schism.

[2] De Maistre shows himself to be one whose evidence cannot be rejected. "Born," he says, "in a house of the *haute magistrature;* brought up in the antique severity of the past; buried, from the cradle, in serious studies; member of a Gallican senate for twenty years; president of a supreme tribunal in a country of obedience (as they say) for three years; then living in a highly educated Protestant country (England) for four years, where I devoted myself unceasingly to the study of its doctrines; after that transported to a Græco-Russian region where, for forty consecutive years, I was in constant touch with the pretensions of Photius and his religious posterity; being acquainted with the ancient languages, which enabled me to consult original documents; profoundly devoted to the Catholic religion; a great lover of your nation, with whom I am in sympathy on many points, especially that of language,—I ask you, Monsieur le Comte, what is wanting to me to enable me to judge of these matters with information and conscientiousness?"—"Lettre au Comte de Marcellus," 13th March, 1820.

there is no Greek Church beyond the limits of Greece, and the Russian Church is no more Greek than it is Coptic or Armenian. She stands alone in the Christian world, not less a stranger to the Pope, whom she despises, than to the schismatical Greek Patriarch, who would be regarded as guilty of a great act of folly if he took it into his head to send any order whatsoever to St. Petersburg." Even the shadow of the last religious co-ordination has disappeared from the Russians along with their Greek Patriarch. The Church of this great people, being entirely isolated, has no longer a spiritual head acknowledged in ecclesiastical history. As for the Holy Synod, although we may have all possible esteem and respect for each of its members individually, yet corporately they constitute simply a national consistory presided over by a civil representative of the Tsar, who exercises in this ecclesiastical committee precisely the same supremacy that the sovereign exercises over the Russian Church in general.[1]

Before approaching the subject of the particular grounds of complaint which the Catholic Church has against the Photian Churches, let us first expose the general objections which can be urged against these Churches, and which prove that they satisfy neither Christian principle nor reason. A primary ground of objection against the Photian Churches is that their primitive canons, and their earliest liturgical institutions, have exactly the same origin as the canons and liturgy of the Roman Church. Russia has only to retrace her history to Photius to find herself in conformity with customs and rules similar to those of that Church. This point has been thoroughly established by Dom Pitra.[2]

The Nomocanon, drawn up in part by Photius, proves the indisputable existence of the tradition of the Roman Church in the East, thanks to the numerous extracts made by Photius from the orthodox canons of John the

[1] "Du Pape," Book I., Chap. x., p. 85, No. 1. From an historical point of view the questions of the transformation of the Russian Church into a national Church, and the institution of the Patriarchate of Russia, are very well treated in Voltaire's "Histoire de Russie," pp. 137, 159, 359, 360.

[2] See Dom Pitra, "Canons et collections canoniques de l'Église grecque" (Rapport au Cardinal Antonelli).

Scholastic, who died as occupant of the See of Constantinople in 577. Dom Pitra studied at the same time the canons of Moscow and of Kief. In respect of the former, he states that after collating four different editions he came to the conclusion there were extraordinary differences among them. When he afterwards compared the edition, preserved by the dissidents, with the most ancient and authentic manuscripts bearing precise dates, he asserts that the originals have been interpolated and enlarged to twice their former length. Besides this, the most ancient manuscript, when compared with the ancient Greek collections which it is alleged to represent, does not give a single canon in its integral text, and if we examine all the Greek collections up to the time of Photius or Justinian, the variations become simply innumerable. In respect of the Nomocanon of Kief, Dom Pitra proves that this code has been extracted quite literally from a manual of Exomology drawn up at Mount Athos towards the year 1610. We thus find ourselves far removed, not merely from the apostolic times, whence the Russian Church pretends to have drawn her rules, but even from the age of Photius, who first falsified the tradition of the Church. Finally, a third sacred document, and one most important, derived from the primitive tradition of the Church, is the *Pravila* or *Indreptarea legij* of the Walachians. Dom Pitra states that, after making several collations of original manuscripts with printed papers dated subsequent to this code, he found that, with the exception of the last pages, none of these manuscripts corresponded to any of the printed versions. But more than this. Chance led him to study, at Berlin, the collection of Malaxus, a pupil of Naupli, whose four hundred scattered articles corresponded, chapter by chapter, with the *Pravila* of the Walachians, even up to the place where the well-known collection of Aristenes begins. Now, Malaxus was engaged upon his work in 1614. What must we think, then, of the tradition by which the Church of Russia pretends to ascend to the apostolic age?

A second argument against Photian orthodoxy is that it is inconsistent with its own principles. According to the doctrine of St. Paul (Acts xx. 28), bishops were divinely

instituted to be the visible heads of the Church, and to govern it. The Eastern Orthodox Church recognises this institution, and yet she has accorded sometimes to simple priests, and sometimes even to mere laymen, the right of exercising ordinary jurisdiction in ecclesiastical matters over the bishops. She has solemnly sanctioned a form of administration which absolutely hinders the independence of her internal government. She has retained in her communion Princes and Princesses who have considered themselves to be really the spiritual heads of the Church. She has permitted their pretensions to be inserted as doctrines in her catechisms, destined for the instruction of the faithful, and proclaimed in some of her most solemn acts. Nay, while the Raskols remained separated from the Orthodox Church, out of dislike of some of her rites, she admitted to her Eucharistic table sects which professed the principal errors of Manicheism and Buddhism. Add to this, that, forgetting the teaching of their own Church,[1] which says—"The sacrament of order, like that of baptism, cannot be twice conferred"—and in spite of the sixty-eighth apostolic canon, when a fifth patriarchal chair was erected at Moscow in 1589, Jeremias, Patriarch of Constantinople, and after him Theophanes, Patriarch of Jerusalem, themselves consecrated a second time the elected Patriarchs.[2]

A third objection against the Photian orthodoxy is that it is a compromise between living authority and tradition. It is Protestantism *plus* an inconsequence. The orthodox admit as an irrefragable authority the first seven Councils. But why these seven rather than all the Councils?—than, for instance, the eighteenth General Council, that of the Vatican? To admit that the Holy Ghost inspired the bishops of the first seven Councils, but not those present at the others, is absurd. Either the Holy Spirit never inspires, as Protestants say, or He always inspires, as Catholics declare. We cannot admit that, subsequently

[1] This situation explains itself. The Holy Synod could not resolve a rubrical question without exposing Russia to some new schism. (See, on this subject, "Die Russiche schismatische Kirsche: Ihre Lehre und ihr Cult," von Dr. Ferd. Kine, Graz, librairie Stquul., 1894.)

[2] After their fashion these Patriarchs thus did more to raise the patriarchate above the episcopacy than has ever been done for the exaltation of the papacy.

to the schism, the Holy Ghost has spoken neither to the Eastern Churches nor to the West, still less that He has closed His inspirations till the end of the world!

A fourth objection is that the Photian Churches are purely national religions. They are limited by their own rivers and seas; Greeks and Russians alone compose the "faithful among them." They may gain an isolated convert, but they have exercised no mission to outsiders. In countries foreign to their own, only the Greek or Russian inhabitants adhere to them. An authority bounded by geographical limits can never be the one we are in search of, because Jesus Christ, when instituting authority in the Church founded by Him, made that authority universal.

A fifth objection against the Photian Churches is that they are absolutely dependent upon the civil power, whatever they may maintain to the contrary. They can not assume that firm attitude which is peculiar to the Catholic Church in presence of the powers of this world. Catholics have ever shown themselves worthy exponents of the teaching of Jesus Christ on the independence of the human soul when brought into contact with the rulers of this earth. But cannot the Oriental Churches recognise that they are no longer independent like their forefathers of old, seeing that they are at the mercy of a despot? How can they oppose the encroachments of Governments upon the ecclesiastical domain after having, by the voice of four patriarchs, approved the Synod of St. Petersburg? The oath which the members of the Holy Synod take to the Tsar is positively degrading to their priesthood.[1] The Church of Russia is more completely in the hands of the Tsar than any other Christian society throughout the world is, in respect of the civil power. Its slavish submission to the Tsar is not merely a fact; it is a sort of dogma.[2] The liturgical catechisms of Russia abound with marks of servility. The catechism of Peter the Great, that of Plato, Metropolitan of Moscow, and that

[1] By this oath they acknowledge the Tsar as the "supreme judge" of the Synod. The oath can be seen *in extenso* in Fr. Cæsar Tondini's "The Pope of Rome," p. 68, etc.

[2] The Tsar, in the Act of Succession of Paul I., and the Pope St. Leo, in the Liturgy, are both styled "Head of the Church."

of Mgr. Philaretus—all three sacrifice the Church to the State. In the liturgical books the names of the Imperial Family are printed in capital letters. The Russian Church is, in fact, only a department of the Government, and her clergy allow themselves to be branded on the brow by a pope in military uniform, with the mark of a superior serfdom. An examination of the various confessions of other Churches brings us to the conclusion, that in none but the Roman Church are those words of Christ verified—"Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's." In the Catholic Roman Church alone does this distinction between the spiritual and the temporal power exist, so as to be a practical point. In every other case the law of God is confounded with the law of Cæsar. It is only the Roman Pontiff who knows how to condescend, and this sometimes very far indeed, but who knows, at the same time, how to utter an energetic *Non possumus!* As a consequence of the above state of affairs in Russia, the Photian Churches have cast off the yoke of their ancient Patriarchs, and they will soon become altogether autocephalous.

The authority of the Ecumenical Patriarch has not been recognised in Russia since the time of Peter I. Greece itself is separated from her. The Patriarch of Carlowitz, in Austria, lately refused to hold communion with his former superior; the Metropolitan of Cyprus has also declared himself independent. Finally, the Greek Church of Macedonia has just (1897) declared herself autonomous, in spite of the protestations of the Phanar; so that the jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Constantinople is limited to the Orthodox Church in the Turkish Empire. When we compare the actual state of the separate Churches of the Oriental rite with their condition at the moment of the schism of Michael Cerularius, it is plain that the Greek Patriarch of Constantinople has lost almost all his ancient authority. In proportion as the new Christian provinces separate themselves from the Turkish Empire, they establish independent national Churches of their own, so that the Patriarch has lost as many subjects as the Sultan. Mummified by the same rites, the Oriental Churches have no other bond of union, and such union

is one rather of form than of spirit. The unity of the Russian Church, also, is only apparent. Her divisions may, perhaps, be less easy of detection than those of other sects, but, nevertheless, they exist and are quite as numerous and active as in any other country. The Raskolniks and the Starowers are true heretics and schismatics of the Greek religion. The bishops are independent of one another, and no centre exists to which the faithful and their pastors are bound to adhere. The Russian Church is a petrified body with which ukases do what they please. M. Leroy-Beaulieu in "L'empire des tsars et la religion russe," shows clearly that under the seductive appearance of unity the Greek religion is full of dissensions, and eaten up by interior corruption. Once let European science breathe upon her and, if she does not enter the Catholic Roman Church, she will march straight into Rationalism. That which unites the Russian Church is the Holy Synod, aided by the sword of the Tsar held over it. This describes the whole of the governing machinery, of which de Maistre remarked that "it holds together only because it is frozen solid." The moment that liberty of conscience is granted them, as in other countries; when the educated laity and, above all, the bishops, shall be free to reason, read, and discuss as they please, then the Russian religion will fall with a crash and break up into atoms.

A last argument against the Photian Churches is the ignorance of their "popes," the superficiality of their Christianity, and the complete indifference of the educated classes. How can the Orientals and the Russians close their eyes to the fact that, although exterior observances are maintained amongst them, the vital sap of religion has died away from their theology and from their clergy? The popes are literary men, but not trained. The greater number of them learn by rote, and recite mechanically and perfunctorily the prayers of the Mass. The performance of ecclesiastical functions is more or less an inherited occupation in Russia, since the sons of priests become priests themselves. A knowledge of this absence of true vocations is necessary to explain the inferiority of the

Russian clergy. Only about ten years ago did sons of noble families begin to enter sacred orders.[1] Such among the popes as have sought for education have, unfortunately, applied to Protestant sources.[2] Again, we may ask how it is that the Orientals do not perceive the merely exterior character of their Christianity? The external worship of images, with its painted pictures, its relics and its medals, accompanied by various forms and incensations, does not ensure a living and interior worship. Not a grain of heavenly nourishment to satisfy either the mind or the heart can be found in it. The words of the Master are here fully realised:—

"I am the Vine, you are the branches. If any one abide not in Me, he shall be cast forth as a branch, and shall wither. And they shall gather him up and cast him into the fire, and he burneth" (John xv. 5, 6). Moreover, the complete indifferentism of the higher and more cultivated classes cannot but hasten the decomposition of Russian Erastianism. There is scarcely a country in the world which contains so many Voltairians as Russia. Upper society there is just what it was in France during the eighteenth century. The works of Strauss, translated by Littré, have had the largest sale there, already reaching to three editions; they have not had the same in France. A Russian lady made this remark—"I am a latitudinarian Christian, but I am passionately orthodox." Such is precisely the attitude of the higher classes throughout Russian society. They support the Orthodox Church, because they see in that Church a safeguard for their privileges and a guarantee for their prosperity; but they are by no means disposed to sacrifice their lives for their orthodoxy.

The Oriental Churches have bishops and priests, validly ordained; they have, besides, all the sacraments as we have them. What then separates them from the Catholic

[1] The father of the present Tsar, Alexander III., created this movement.

[2] The secular clergy of all the Oriental rites, both Catholic and schismatical, are married; but their marriages must be contracted before ordination. Should a priest become a widower he is not allowed to marry again. Many of the Russian clergy who have studied at the German universities are inclined to Rationalism.

Church? It is certainly not the doctrine of the Procession of the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son, for they merely quibble on this point. They know quite well that the Catholic interpretation is the only true interpretation of Scripture.[1] Even celibacy is voluntarily accepted by many among them.[2] It is the papacy which repels them, together with the extension that time has imparted to it. Like the Anglicans, they are divided from us almost exclusively on the one question of obedience to Rome. They admit, it is true, a primacy of honour for the Sovereign Pontiff, but they deny that the Pope has universal and immediate jurisdiction over all Christians in the world, even over Protestants; they revolt, too, against the doctrine of his Infallibility *ex cathedra*. Thus, when Pius IX. convoked all the Oriental bishops to assist at the Council, thus recognising their episcopal character, the orthodox prelates were indignant that the "Roman heresy should dare to attempt to instruct the orthodox." And yet, when speaking and acting thus, can they believe in their own sincerity? It is not easy to give them the benefit of the doubt.

Like ourselves, the orthodox recognise that the Church is the Society of God. Since it was Jesus Christ who founded it, He has doubtless made known in what persons its government resides. An authority established by Jesus Christ ought to have existed uninterruptedly since the time of Jesus Christ. And yet, according to the orthodox Oriental Church, this society of Jesus presents to the world the strangest phenomenon ever displayed by any society before her. Orthodoxy says, in effect, that Jesus Christ forgot to tell this society, with sufficient clearness, to whom He had confided the supreme authority over her. He took particular care to designate the different degrees of hierarchy comprised in the sacred orders, but as to the hierarchy which

[1] See "Dogmata theologica," by Père Pétau; also "Essai de conciliation de théologie, de philosophie et d'histoire," by the Pères Daniel and Gagarin. 1857.

[2] The author here refers to the regular clergy, whose monasteries are numerous. The monks follow the rule of St. Basil. The bishops, who are bound to celibacy, are usually selected from the monastic clergy.

governs the Church, He is supposed to have left her to arrange that for herself. Is this primitive tradition, or has it any warranty in Scripture? But how are we to know the will of Jesus Christ on this point? An indisputable fact will help us to do so. There always has been in the Church an authority superior to that of all ordinary bishops. Never has any ordinary bishop been constituted highest in dignity in the hierarchy of the Oriental Church, or in any one of its divisions. This fact is admitted by all the orthodox. But among the numerous authorities who have governed the orthodox Eastern bishops, where are we to look for an authority so fit to lean upon as that instituted by Jesus Christ? Shall it be the Patriarch of Constantinople, who to-day possesses an uncontested pre-eminence over the other orthodox Patriarchs? But we must remember that three hundred years had come and gone after the Ascension before this town of Constantine had become at all known to the world at large, while its Patriarch had not even appeared upon the scene. Or shall this authority be vested in the Patriarch of Jerusalem? Yet his date is only a degree more ancient than that of the first Bishop of Constantinople. It is clear, then, that neither of these can have been instituted by Jesus Christ, as the primatial See. Well, then, shall it be the "Holy Synod," directing from St. Petersburg in 1721, or the Synod of Athens in 1833? Neither, however, of these lays any claim to it. There remain two patriarchates, inseparable in origin from the name and history of St. Peter—the patriarchate of Antioch and the patriarchate of Alexandria. Should these two claim to be of Divine institution, because they were founded by St. Peter, Rome can very well make the like claim. But, in point of fact, by placing the two patriarchates of Antioch and Alexandria after that of Constantinople, which was instituted so much later, the Oriental Orthodox Church evidently acknowledged the purely human institution of these two patriarchates. A once living authority has, therefore, disappeared from the Orthodox Eastern Church, though it existed there clearly enough before the schism of Photius, as its

history testifies. This authority returned to the Orthodox Church more than once after the death of Photius, but only for a time; and in the eleventh century it vanished entirely from it. Such authority is the only one which befits an universal Church—the only one which leads us to Jesus Christ. If that did not come from God, God has not established any authority at all. Such authority is vested in the Pope.[1]

There is no need to add anything to the clear proofs we have already given of the powers of the Roman Pontiff, and of the prerogatives which flow therefrom. Yet, we believe it will not be out of place to carry conviction to our readers by refuting the Orientals directly on this point, and by quoting their own formal avowals on the question. Each circumstance marking the beginning of the schism implies an acknowledgment of the papal primacy.

"If we go back to the origin of the dissension," says Leo XIII., "we find Photius himself taking care to send to Rome the defenders of his cause; we see, on the other hand, that Pope Nicholas I. could, without raising any objection, send his legates from Rome to Constantinople, commissioned by him to inquire into the cause of the Patriarch Ignatius, to collect ample and certain information, and then to refer the case to the Apostolic See. So that the whole history of the affair, which was to end in rupture with the See of Rome, serves to furnish her with a striking confirmation of the truth of her primacy. Indeed, no one is ignorant that, in two great Ecumenical Councils, the second of Lyons and that of Florence, both Latins and Greeks, with one spontaneous accord and one united voice, proclaimed the doctrine of the Supremacy of the Roman Pontiff."[2]

[1] This is the key to the problem of the divisions of Christendom, which have produced, in exchange for authority with unity, absolute anarchy with a confusion of conflicting beliefs and perversions of Scripture.

[2] The encyclical *Præclara gratulationis*, 20th June, 1894.—In the eleventh century, Michael, Patriarch of Constantinople, having renewed the schism, Pope Leo IX. sent legates to this city to try to pacify and unite the schismatics. The monk Nicetas Pectoratus, holding the hands of the legates, and in presence of the Emperor Constantine Nocomacus, anathematised what he had written against the Roman Church on the subject of Easter, the Sabbath, and the marriage of priests. The legates did not stop here; they caused him also to anathematise all those who should deny that the Roman Church was the first of all Churches, or who should presume to question her faith on any point whatsoever.

"Have we not seen Photius," says J. de Maistre, "address himself to Pope Nicholas I. in 859 to obtain the confirmation of his election; the Emperor Michael obtain from this same Pope legates who were sent to reform the Church of Constantinople; and, again, Photius endeavour, after the death of Ignatius, to seduce Pope John VIII. into granting him the confirmation which he was still left without? Did not the clergy of Constantinople, in a body, have recourse to Pope Stephen in 886, and solemnly recognise his supremacy, asking from him, conjointly with the Emperor Leo, a dispensation for the Patriarch Stephen, brother to the emperor, because this Patriarch had been ordained by a schismatic? And is it not a fact that the Roman Emperor, who had created his son Theophilus Patriarch of Constantinople at sixteen years of age, had recourse to Pope John XI. in 933 to obtain the necessary dispensations, begging, at the same time, that the pallium might be accorded to the Patriarch, or, more properly speaking, to the Church of Constantinople, once for all, without compelling each Patriarch to demand it in the future for himself? And, again, did not the Emperor Basil, in 1019, send ambassadors to Pope John XII. in order to procure, in favour of the Patriarch of Constantinople, the title of Ecumenical Patriarch for the East, in like manner as the Pope was Patriarch over the whole earth? What strange contradictions these in the human mind! The Greeks recognised the sovereignty of Rome when they wanted any favour from it, and they separated from it when it resisted their demands. Thus did they acknowledge it in the very act of rejecting it."

The following passage occurs in a letter to a Russian lady:—"More than once, madame, it will happen to you, as it has to myself, to hear it said in society, with a gravity worthy of the deepest pity, that it was not the Greek Church that separated itself from the Latin, but the Latin Church that separated from the Greek. We might just as well say that Pougatscheff did not revolt against Catherine II., but, on the contrary, that Catherine revolted against Pougatscheff. Let all possible reasons be alleged to justify the schism of the Greeks, such as the pride of the Roman Church, her abuses, innovations, despotism, corrup-

tion, and so forth, but I solemnly defy the whole Greek Church, in a body, to give me a single reason which I shall not be able to turn, on the spot, with mathematical precision, against Catherine II. in favour of Pougatscheff."[1] In his book, "Du Pape," de Maistre insists on the same fact—"The ancient submission to the Holy See is on a level with those historical facts which can by no means be contested. And there is even this special peculiarity about it: the schism of the Greeks having never been an affair concerning doctrine, but purely one of pride, they never ceased to render homage to the supremacy of the Sovereign Pontiff by condemning themselves up to the very moment when they separated from him, in such a way, also, that their dissident Church, when in the very act of dying to unity, made confession of it with her last sigh."[2]

But more than this: the whole of the Oriental traditions recognised the Divine origin of the prerogatives of the Roman Pontiffs. In the synodal letter of the Council of Chalcedon, addressed to St. Leo, we find these words—"There were present one hundred and twenty priests, over whom you presided by those who held your place, as the head presides over the members."[3] The Council of Ephesus is no less explicit. Philip, the legate of Pope St. Celestine, having said that "the blessed Peter received from Jesus Christ the keys of the kingdom: He lives and decides always in his successors," the Fathers of the Council answered—"These things are so; we must conform ourselves thereto."[4] At the third Council of Constantinople, the letter of Pope St. Agatho was thus welcomed by the acclamations of the Fathers—"It appeared, indeed, to be written with ink upon paper, but it was, virtually, Peter speaking by the mouth of Agatho."[5] At the second session of the second Council of Nicea, the letters of Pope St. Adrian were read to the Patriarch Tarasius. In the first of these are the words—"By a disposition of Divine

[1] "Letter to a Russian lady on the nature and effects of the schism and on Catholic unity." The Anglican Ritualistic party, in defiance of all history, make a similar statement to the one referred to by de Maistre. "We did not leave Rome, Rome left us. We simply purged our Church of errors."

[2] Book I., Chap. x.

[3] Labbe, t. IV., p. 33.

[4] Labbe, t. IV., p. 1154.

[5] Mansi, t. XI., pp. 531, 658, 683.

Providence, Peter gave to his successors the same authority and the same power that he himself had received from the Saviour." The second declared that "Peter, governing the Church by the order of God, has never suffered the Holy See to be degraded, but possesses the primacy for ever." After these letters were read, the Patriarch Tarasius declared that Pope Adrian had "written justly, and according to truth," a declaration to which all the Council agreed.[1] The most imposing testimony of the tradition of the Oriental Church on this point is to be found in the Formulary of the Pope Hormisdas,[2] which was signed by all the bishops who had followed the schism of Acacius, by the Fathers of the eighth Council, by a great number of other bishops, and by the Emperor Justinian himself. Now, this formula ran as follows:—"The first principle of salvation is to keep the rules of the true faith, and to admit the truth of this word of Jesus Christ—*Tu es Petrus*. The truth of this word is proved by facts, since religion has ever been preserved pure and unstained in the Apostolic See. I hope ever to remain in the same communion with you in whom is the Apostolic See, wherein resides the entire and perfect solidity of the true Christian religion. I promise not to recite, in the sacred mysteries, the names of those who are separated from the Catholic Church. If I ever prove false to this my profession, I place myself by the sentence which I now pronounce in the number of those whom I condemn. I have signed this with my own hand,"[3] etc.

The Emperors themselves declared decisively that the spiritual supremacy of the Popes was not derived from them, but from God Himself. Constantine, in his edict,

[1] Hardouin, t. VI., p. 27, etc. Mansi, t. XIII., p. 209, etc.

[2] Let us hear Fénelon—"God forbid that so solemn an act, by which the schismatical bishops returned to unity, should ever be taken for a mere vague flattering compliment, signifying nothing precise or serious. It was question of the promise of the Son of God to Peter, a promise which verifies itself, age after age, by the course of events. Listen not to those who would dare to say that this formula, made twelve hundred years ago to remedy the schism of Acacius, was but a passing enterprise of the See of Rome. This profession of faith, so decisive on the subject of unity, was revived by Adrian II., more than three hundred years later, to put an end to the Photian schism, and was universally approved in the eighth General Council." (2nd mandate on the constitution "Unigenitus," Œuvres complètes, t. XIV., p. 541.)

[3] Mansi et Labbe, t. IV., p. 486.

speaks thus—"It is not just that where the primacy of the priesthood, and the headship of the whole Christian religion have been divinely established, the earthly Prince should also have the seat of his dominion."[1] "We will not permit," wrote Justinian, "that anything which concerns the state of the Churches should be regulated without having first referred the matter to His Holiness, for He is the head of all the most holy priests of God.[2] The Emperor Marcion wrote to St. Leo—"We have rightly judged that Your Holiness, who governs the whole episcopate, should speak first, in order that, all error being banished, peace may ensue." Theodosius the Younger, speaking in the same strain, says—"The Bishop of Rome, in whom antiquity has ever recognised the principality of the priesthood, must judge in matters of faith." These citations prove that the Emperors of the East themselves acknowledged that they were not the authors of the prerogatives of the Sovereign Pontiffs.

Again, such of the Greek schismatics as have explained the causes of the rupture, grant that the Pope is the visible head of the visible Church, and that, in this capacity he has the right to preside in all General Councils. Melchites, Archbishop of Nicomedia in the twelfth century, willingly accepted the primacy of the Pope. He disputed only the Pope's absolute power, and the infallibility of his papal decisions. Nilus Cabasilas, Archbishop of Thessalonica, maintained the same thesis in his work entitled, "On the Primacy of the Pope." "The Sovereign Pontiff," he states, "is the head of the Church; all must obey him; and nothing must be done against his honour."[3] Simeon of Thessalonica asserts the same—"It is not necessary to contradict the Latins who affirm the primacy. The primacy injures the Church in no respect. Let them only prove that the Pope keeps the faith, and he may have all that belongs to Peter."[4] St. Theophilact, Bishop of Bulgaria, says—"St. Paul names St. Peter by himself, and last of all, because he is the greatest of them all."

[1] Bevereg, t. II. "Biblioth. juris canon. veteris," t. II., p. 919.
[2] "Code Justinien," Book I., tit. I., art. vii.
[3] "Summa."
[4] "Dial. contra. heres.," Chap. xxiii.

The schismatics, who make these avowals, try to escape the contradiction which they involve by maintaining that "the Popes have lost their prerogatives, because they have erred from the true faith." But how can they, without denying the whole force of their tradition, even admit the possibility that the Roman Pontiffs should fall from the true faith? Have they not themselves proclaimed, a hundred times and more, the indefectibility of the See of Rome? Besides, if the Roman Pontiffs, who occupied the Chair of Peter after the holding of the Councils on which their predecessors had conferred ecumenical authority and the power to enunciate irreformable dogma, could still err in their formal decrees, although heirs of all the prerogatives of their predecessors, it would result that those who confirmed the doctrine of the Councils could equally err, and so bestow their confirmation on error and not on truth alone. Who can guarantee that it has not been so? And if this were the case, what has become of the Church? Lastly, according to the Councils, and according to all tradition, a doctrine cannot be denounced and proclaimed to be an error, without the participation of the Roman Pontiff. So that there is no doctrinal authority, beyond or above him, that has power to declare who are heretics. Consequently, the points of doctrine on which Photius, Cerularius, and Mark of Ephesus reproached the Church as having erred, not having yet been examined in a Council recognised as ecumenical, cannot be taxed with error by them, without usurpation of the right to judge definitively, in contradiction to the rules of the Councils contained in their own proper traditions.[1] There exists, therefore, between the Western and the Eastern Churches no real dogmatic divergence which prevents their union.[2]

[1] Nilus of Rhodes attributes the presidency of all the Ecumenical Councils to the Roman Pontiffs, in his "Histoire synoptique des saints synodes œcuméniques." Two Ecumenical Councils were held without the Pope being represented. By the avowal of modern Greeks, they were not Ecumenical until the Pope had confirmed them. This is the doctrine of the Pidalion, a collection of canons still in use at Constantinople. (Prolégomènes au premier concile de Nicée, No. 1.)

[2] The divergences usually set forth are attributable to particular authors, in whom the Oriental Church does not recognise the right to speak in her name. An example of this occurred in 1896, when the schismatical Greek Patriarch of Constantinople replied to Pope Leo XIII.'s Encyclical, exhorting the Orientals to return to Catholic Unity, by a pamphlet which displayed great theological ignorance, and was thoroughly Protestant in tone.

Finally, the prerogatives of St. Peter and his successors have been constantly recognised in the liturgies of the Orientals. It is incomprehensible how any Church can thus daily chant her own condemnation.[1] The liturgy of the Græco-Slavonic Church in the original Greek calls St. Peter, by antonomasy, not only the "foundation of the Church," but also "foundation of the Apostles," and the "foundation-stone of the Apostles." How could the Catholic doctrine be more forcibly or more precisely stated?[2] Elsewhere, the Roman Church is styled the "Key of the Kingdom of heaven;"[3] the "immovable basis of dogmas," and "the head of the Church."[4] "The Prince of the Apostles has made you his worthy successor," are the words addressed to St. Clement, who is also spoken of as "a stone of honour, built upon the rock of Peter—a sun which enlightens all the earth."[5] St. Sylvester is appealed to as "our father—the bearer of God to us. By thy teaching, always infallible, thou hast carried the faithful towards the divine land. Thou art the Prelate divinely established over the consecrating Fathers, confirming their doctrine, and closing the mouth of error."[6] St. Leo is called "the head of the Orthodox Church of Christ, the sure foundation of the faith, the Ancient of the Supreme College, the successor of St. Peter in the primacy."[7] St. Gregory I. is exalted in these terms—"God has called you to be the Sovereign Bishop of His Church."[8] We could multiply similar citations to these. The fact is in itself so clear that an orthodox Greek wrote in the year 1854—"As regards the supremacy of Peter over all the Apostles, and the authority of his successors over all the Church, the Books of the Offices of the Church, both Russian and Greek, are full of the most explicit testimonies, to such a degree indeed that one can only compare them to the Ultramontane doctrine

[1] See "La primauté de Saint Pierre prouvée par les titres que lui donne l'Église russe dans sa liturgie," by Caesar Tondini.
[2] "In officiis Sti. Petri ad vincula," 16th Jan.; et "S. Petri et Pauli," 29th June.
[3] "Offic. S. Pet. ad vinc. ad matutinum," Ode III.
[4] "Offic. S. Leonis Papæ," Ode IX.
[5] "Ménées," 25th November.
[6] The Greek Liturgical Books, 2nd Jan.
[7] "Ménées," 18th Feb.
[8] *Ibid.*, 12th March.

which places the Pope above Councils." Such are the weapons, against themselves, with which the Orientals furnish us on the question of the supremacy of the Pope.

Anglicans and Protestants are much more logical. They pretend that Peter was never anything more than first among equals; nay, all do not grant him even so much as this.[1]

If, on the contrary, it be conceded (with the Orientals) that, according to the texts we have cited, and according to their whole tradition, Peter was truly the head of the Apostles, this very simple argument follows. Were even the Apostles, though men inspired by God, in need of some head, how much greater must be the need that bishops, who are only successors of the Apostles and not inspired in any sense, should have a superior to govern and preserve them in unity? If, in a body of twelve men, God appointed one to be the head, with how much greater reason must He desire that, when the number to be governed is not twelve, but twelve hundred bishops, his institution of a Primate should be permanent.

It is inconceivable that Jesus Christ should have instituted a Vicegerent of His own Person in the small Apostolic College, and yet not have willed that the numerous successors of the Apostles should also have a chief at their head. It is much more consistent to say there was never any head at all from the beginning.[2] If

[1] Nothing but the most obtuse perversity can prevent any reader of the Bible from admitting its overwhelming evidence of the primacy and supremacy of St. Peter. St. John xxi., if it were the only evidence, would be ample proof of his position in the One Fold of Christ.

[2] This is the position of the Evangelical party in the Church of England, who are thus in agreement with the majority of the Protestant sects. Their chief arguments against St. Peter's primacy are of absolutely no theological value whatever. Following the lead of Barrow they say that Christ did not constitute St. Peter the rock, for He said, "Thou art Peter (πετρος), and upon this rock (πετρα) I will build my Church," meaning by "this rock" Himself. But Christ spoke, not Greek, but Aramaic, and in Aramaic, the original language of St. Mathew's Gospel, there are no such euphonious distinctions as the Greek πετρος and πετρα, but one word only is used in both places, viz., Kipha, which is equivalent to "Rock," or Peter. And the name of Simon was not without signification changed to Kephas, or Kipha, by Christ Himself—"Thou shalt be called Kephas." The only other objection worthy of the slightest notice is that derived from the conduct of St. Paul in once withstanding Peter to the face "because he was to be blamed." How this affects the question it is hard to see. It would be equally logical to say that because Blessed Thomas More "withstood" Henry VIII., that monarch was inferior in authority to his Chancellor.

there has ever been even one, then good sense says that this institution must have been intended to last to the end.

What opinion are we to form respecting a return of the Oriental Churches to unity: a return so earnestly desired by all Catholics?[1] For such a return the way would be sufficiently prepared by the conversion of the Tsar and of the high dignitaries of the Church. The people would then soon follow. What encourages our hope is that, thanks to the spread of education, and the facilities of inter-communication, the truth and superiority of Catholicism are daily becoming more and more evident to the Orientals.[2] Another indication is the union so cordially cemented between the Russians and the French, by means of which two Catholic priests, Père Vanutelli and Père Caesar Tondini, have been able at a recent date, in company with a French bishop, Mgr. Jourdan de la Passardière, to travel freely all through Russia, to enter into the most cordial relations with the leading civil and ecclesiastical personages in the Empire, and to speak of the reunion of the Churches without giving offence to any one. Formerly, the very word union raised a storm in the East, properly so-called. To-day, in Greece and in the Balkan States, it is spoken of as advantageous and desirable. The public newspapers amicably discuss the conditions, waiting for the respective Parliaments to make it the subject of their deliberations. The hour of awakening is at hand. The question is the order of the

[1] To render an exact account of the importance of the end to be attained, and at the same time of the difficulties in the way of its attainment, it is well to understand first the actual present condition of the Oriental Churches, both uniate and dissident. This is easy by the help of recently published documents, such as the "Orbis terrarum catholicus" of the Rev. P. Werner, S.J.; "Missiones catholicæ," of 1892; "Carte ecclésiastique de l'Empire ottoman," published by the Rev. P. Charmettant, director of studies of the Oriental Schools, in 1893; and the book of the Rev. P. Michel, of the White Fathers, former director of the Greek Uniate Seminary for the first year's studies at Jerusalem, entitled "L'Orient et Rome," published in 1896.

[2] Mgr. Joannice, Archbishop of Kiew, said recently to a Russian Count, from whom we have it—"The separation will end. These are plaster walls raised by the hand of man. Happily, they do not reach as high as heaven!" The same archbishop protested at the Holy Synod, in 1895, against the expurgation of the writings of the Rev. Father Tolstoi, who had done so much to promote the cause of reunion. "I see no reason to condemn him," he said, "because I see no official document proving our rupture with Rome."

day. The Russians and the Oriental nations will one day live quite another life. Shall it be the life of Protestantism and Rationalism, destroying the faith along with respect for all sacred formulas and ancient councils? Or are these ancient and venerable formulas destined to save the faith? Shall we see the East and West reunited in the one Church, living and powerful in word and work? The near future will answer. This much is certain, there is but one alternative for the Eastern Churches: either salvation by union with the Catholic Church, or destruction and death through the invasion of false science and Protestant rationalism.[1] Surely we may hope that the ardent soul of the Slav will refuse to turn to Protestantism.[2] That reunion will take place is the unshaken confidence of the grand labourer in its cause, Mgr. Strossmayer, Bishop of Diakovar. "For my part," he wrote in 1891, "I am convinced that what is regarded to-day as a dream, or a wild, impracticable scheme, will become before the middle, or at least before the end of the twentieth century, a happy and blessed reality."[3]

Among other circumstances favourable to the reunion of the Photian Churches with Catholicism, the large-minded and conciliatory dispositions of Leo. XIII. deserve especial attention. The separated Churches at one time feared for their nationality. They dreaded lest the religious and the missionaries, sent by Rome, should Latinise the populations. Now, the Pope has expressed his desire to maintain the

[1] Many times have the Protestants tried to unite the dissident Eastern Churches with themselves in opposing the Church of Rome, but without success. One of the most influential members of the Anglican Church some years since proposed this union to the Holy Synod of Russia; he was answered by a demand for a formula of his belief. The Anglican sent a profession of faith under forty headings. The Holy Synod returned it, declaring that in these forty articles they had found fifty-two heresies! When at Kiew festivities were held in honour of the thousandth anniversary of the introduction of Christianity into Russia, the Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury sent to the Russian bishops assembled in that city a telegram, in which he expressed his wishes for the union of the English Protestant Churches with the Orthodox Russian Church. The Russian bishops answered that they could not do anything, on this occasion, except drink to the health of the Anglicans!

[2] This illusion is a very mistaken one. Protestant science is disuniting more and more the old Churches of the East, and will soon destroy them altogether unless the barrier of reunion between the East and West is firmly planted to oppose it. (See "L'Orient et Rome," by the Rev. P. Michel, pp. 6-77.)

[3] "Lenten Pastoral," 1891, by the Bishop of Diakovar.

Oriental rites, and the traditional privileges with which the different nationalities identify themselves. Far from weakening the prestige of the Patriarchs, he intends to augment their dignity. The dissidents need not fear, as they rally round the chiefs of their races and of their rites, that they will be condemned to abandon usages which they received from their ancestors. Schools and seminaries are already being founded for recruiting and training their clergy. "The East for the Easterns" is the formula which expresses the spirit of the last apostolic utterance on the subject.[1] And as to any suspicion felt by the orthodox peoples that the supremacy of the Sovereign Pontiff would be in any sense detrimental to their temporal Sovereigns, let them remember that those Kings who now belong to the Church of Rome are in no way restrained by their title of Children of the Church from the full and free exercise of their sovereignty. Unity must come; it may be by degrees. Time, and the grace of God, will complete what Leo XIII. has begun. Meanwhile it can confidently be asserted that this great work has never been so thoroughly taken in hand as it is now. "The Oriental schisms," writes the Abbé Duchesne, "place before us their difficult problems, but these problems, let us be well assured, appeal much more to our charity and our love of peace than to our theological erudition."[2]

The Catholic religion is, then, the only positive religion which bears the test of examination. "I used to have moments of regret," wrote M. Rénan, after having left the seminary, "that I was not a Protestant, in order that I might be a philosopher without ceasing to be a Christian, but I saw clearly that Catholicism alone was logical." Catholicism has been called intolerant. The word is ill-chosen. It is more correct to say that she can make no concessions, because she is the truth. Outside absolute

[1] "Orientalium dignitas Ecclesiarum," 5th Dec., 1894.

[2] "Les schismes orientaux," *La Quinzaine*, 1st May, 1895. The Protestant Archbishop of York, Dr. Maclagan, visited St. Petersburg in the spring of the year 1897, for the purpose of opening the question of union between the Russian and the Anglican Churches. His Grace hoped that his efforts to obtain recognition of the validity of Anglican Orders would be more successful in Russia than they were in Rome, their invalidity having been formally declared by Leo XIII. in 1896. In this hope he was, however, disappointed.

truth, what remains but doubt? It is as ridiculous to complain of this immobility of Christianity as of the unchangeableness of the moral law. With regard to other religious systems, Catholicism can do nothing but assume an attitude of universal and irreconcilable opposition; such is the attitude of truth in the presence of error. With regard to individuals, on the contrary, her attitude is always one of mercy, peace, and pardon. This is the unvarying attitude assumed by Leo XIII.[1]

Concerning the errors of the Reformers, the Pope has pointed out the abysses of falsehood into which the fatal principle of private judgment caused them to fall. His words are—"Hence results an infinity of contradictory opinions and multiplied divisions, some of them bordering on the errors of naturalism and rationalism. Thus, despairing of doctrinal unity among ourselves, they now preach and write in favour of that union which springs from fraternal charity; and so far justly, for we ought all to be united in the bonds of charity. But how can perfect charity cement our hearts together if faith has not united our minds?" To the separated Christians of the Oriental Church, the Holy Father wrote—"We ask of you association and union; we desire perfect and unreserved unity with you. Now, the union we speak of certainly cannot be such as implies only a certain unity of dogmatic belief and an interchange of fraternal charity. True union, among Christians, is that which was willed and instituted by Jesus Christ, and which consists in the unity of faith along with unity of government." The highest desire of our great Pontiff he thus expresses—"We see before us, in the distant future, a new order of things unrolling itself. . . . The last century left Europe fatigued by disasters, still trembling from the convulsions which had agitated it. May it be that the

[1] "There cannot be the least doubt as to the nature of the attitude of the present head of the Catholic Church. To my mind it is paternal, in the widest sense of the word, and although it ranks among the latest remembrances of my life, I shall ever preserve its memory with tender sentiments of respect, gratitude, and high esteem."—W. E. Gladstone, "The Question of Anglican Orders," May, 1896. Leo XIII., in a bull destined to make a marked impression on the world, formally pronounced the nullity of Anglican Orders in 1896. Since this event Mr. Gladstone appeared to cease to entertain the respectful opinions expressed in the above extract.

present century, which draws to its close, shall in return transmit, as a heritage to the human race, some pledges of concord, some hope of the great blessings which unity promises to the Christian faith."[1] God grant that this desire of Leo XIII. be realised! and that all heretics may come to understand that the sects, in whose arms their ancestors were reared, are not their true mothers!

Would that we might witness their return to the Catholic Church, that undying Church, so justly called by St. Paul "the pillar and ground of the truth"! Let us hold out to them the right hand of fellowship to help them to cross the chasm of separation. *Jungamus dextras.* . . .

Our conclusion to this study of orthodox Christianity and of the dissentient communions around us shall be summed up in the words of Cardinal Newman—"This mark she" (the Catholic Church) "has upon her at very first sight, that she is unlike every other profession of religion. Were she God's Prophet or Messenger she would be distinctive in her characteristics, isolated, and special; and so she is. She is one, not only internally, but in contrast to everything else; she has no relationships with any other body. There is no revelation given us, unless she is the organ of it. Your anticipation has failed, your probability has been falsified, if she be not the Prophet of God. I do not say this is an absurdity, for you cannot take it for granted that your hope will be fulfilled; but in whatever degree it is probable that it will be fulfilled, in that degree it is probable that the Church, and nothing else, is the means of fulfilling it. Nothing else; for you cannot believe in your heart that this or that Sect, that this or that Establishment is, in its teaching and its commands, the oracle of the Most High. I know you cannot say in your heart — I believe this or that, because the English establishment, or the Scotch, declares that it is true. Nor could you, I am sure, trust the Russian community, or the Nestorian, or the Jacobite, as speaking from God; at the utmost you might, if you were learned in these matters, look on them as venerable depositories of historical matter,

[1] Encyc. *Præclara gratulationis publicæ testimonia*, 1894.

and witnesses of past ages. You would exercise your judgment and criticism on what they said, and would never think of taking their word as decisive. They are in no sense prophets, oracles, judges of supernatural truth; and the contrast between them and the Catholic Church is a preliminary evidence in her favour.

"A prophet is one who comes from God, who speaks with authority, who is ever one and the same, who is precise and decisive in his statements, who is equal to successive difficulties, and can smite and overthrow error. Such has the Catholic Church shown herself in her history; such is she at this day. She alone has the divine spell of controlling the reason of man, and eliciting faith in her word from high and low, educated and ignorant, restless and dull-minded. To see her is to recognise her; her look and bearing is the evidence of her royal lineage. True, her tokens might be clearer than they are; I grant it. She might have been set up in Adam, and not in Peter; she might have embraced the whole family of man; she might have been the instrument of inwardly converting all hearts; she might have had no trouble within or misfortune without; she might, in short, have been a heaven on earth. But does she not show as glorious as a creature, as her God does as the Creator? . . .

"You believe the Scriptures. Does she not show as divine as Samuel, or as Isaias, or as Jeremias, or as Daniel, or in a far higher measure? Has she not notes far more than sufficient for the purpose of convincing you? She takes her rise from the very coming of Christ and receives her charter, as also her very form and character, from His mouth. 'Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father who is in heaven. And I say unto thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven.'

"Coming to you, then, from the very time of the Apostles, spreading out into all lands, triumphing over a thousand

revolutions, exhibiting so awful a unity, glorying in so mysterious a vitality, so majestic, so imperturbable, so bold, so saintly, so sublime, so beautiful, O ye sons of men, can ye doubt that she is the Divine Messenger for whom ye seek? O long sought after, tardily found! desire of the eyes, joy of the heart, the truth after many shadows, the fulness after many foretastes, the home after many storms. Come to her, poor wanderer, for she it is, and she alone, who can unfold the meaning of your being and the secret of your destiny!"[1]

Cardinal Manning, that other great convert from heresy, spoke to the same effect. "I have suffered for embracing the faith," we read in one of his letters; "but, as the soul says in Dante—*E de martirio venni a questa pace!*" The *Times* having announced, in 1852, the return of Manning to Anglicanism, he wrote a letter which appeared in it, saying—"I have found in the Catholic Church all that I sought for, more even than I was capable of conceiving before I entered her fold."[2]

[1] "Discourses addressed to Mixed Congregations"—"Mysteries of Nature and of Grace," pp. 294-297.

[2] In refutation of the modern and unhistorical statement that "the early British Church" (which, before the mission of St. Augustine in 597, had been almost exterminated by the pagan Saxons and had retreated to Wales) "was an independent, national, and non-papal denomination," see "Britain's Early Faith," by the Rev. W. H. Anderdon, S.J.

CHAPTER VII.

CHRISTIAN DOGMA.

"I confess to Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones. Yea, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight."—St. Matt. xi. 25, 26.

"We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews indeed a stumbling-block, and unto the Gentiles foolishness."—1 Cor. i. 23.

"THAT Three are One; that God became Man; that bread and wine become His Body and Blood; that God is just, and yet that He condemns mankind to suffer the penalty of a fault which it did not commit — the sin of Adam; that though God is good, yet the pains of hell are eternal"[1] Nay more, that God, notwithstanding His goodness, while in His infinite wisdom He foresaw the eternal loss of millions of souls, did nevertheless create them; that we are free, endued with real liberty, and yet that our salvation depends entirely upon the operation of grace; that Christian truth is the very truth which God brought into the world, and yet that this truth is filled with obscurity, and has gradually expanded in the course of ages—such are the points which many intelligent and well-educated Christians have felt at times assailing their minds with anxious thoughts against their faith, and which hostile apologists strive to argue out according to philosophical principles. It is then that we can understand the exclamation of Tertullian, as of Bossuet, and of other great Christian souls, *Credo quia absurdum*—"I believe just because the thing is in itself so unlikely to be true, that no human intelligence could have invented so great a paradox as the Christian faith."

[1] J. Lemaitre, *Revue bleue*, 6th Jan., 1894, on "Louis Veuillot."

The first point to be established is that in respect of a religion of Divine origin it is absurd to try and prove its dogma by human reasoning. A man may take offence at the doctrine of the Blessed Eucharist. He will not accept it unless demonstrated to him after the manner of an algebraic equation; in this he is unreasonable. He ought instead to ask—"Is Jesus Christ truly God? Did He work miracles? Did He through them prove His Divine mission?" If once these questions are satisfactorily answered, nothing more is left for discussion. God does not wish us to discuss Him. He declares to us—"I am a supernatural Being; I know all things; discussion begins and ends with Me. Question neither My Being nor Action. It is just you should ask of Me, like Gideon, if it is indeed I who speak; but when this doubt is once settled you have no cause to be disquieted, though what I tell you may not be conformable to your limited understanding."

By his faith the true Christian believes things that are most incomprehensible. "Oh, man," exclaims Bossuet, "accept the remedy as it is presented to you; believe while you await the act of vision. To believe constitutes your merit; to see is your reward." "How easily do I triumph," he again cries out, "when I behold the faith of the Good Thief. His bodily sight showed him nothing but the crosses, yet to the eyes of his faith these appeared as thrones." These words of Bossuet show to us a man who believed with his whole soul, and who at the same time well understood that faith has its difficulties.

I.

The first mystery proposed to the faith of a Christian is that of the Blessed Trinity. In proof of the truth of this mystery, we have the most simple argument ever invented by man:—Jesus Christ taught the mystery of the Holy and Adorable Trinity; but Jesus Christ is God; therefore this mystery is true.

We prove the major proposition. Jesus Christ taught us the doctrine—"I came forth from the Father," He says,

"and am come into the world: again I leave the world, and I go to the Father" (St. John xvi. 28). "I and the Father are one" (St. John x. 30). "I am in my Father, and you in Me, and I in you. He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me. And he that loveth Me, shall be loved of My Father; and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. . . . If any one love Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our abode with him . . . the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you" (St. John xiv. 21-26). Jesus strongly insisted upon His right to the title of Son of God when He was arraigned in presence of the judges. Before withdrawing His visible presence from the earth He promised the Paraclete to the Church—"I will pray the Father, that He may give you another Paraclete who shall abide with you for ever, the Spirit of Truth whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, nor knoweth Him: but you shall know Him; because He shall abide with you, and shall be in you" (St. John xiv. 16, etc.). And when He sent the Apostles to evangelise the nations, the Saviour states the mystery completely and fully in the words—"Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (St. Matt. xxviii. 19).

The idea of the Trinity is sublime in itself, and helps to the explanation of creation. Without revelation it could never have been known. Being revealed, it clears up more than one obscure point. Christianity has produced the most beautiful and precise formula for describing the Infinite. What is so truly sublime in this dogma is that God is not as it were alone in heaven. There is an eternal association, inter-relationship, and intense Divine life, common to the Three Divine Persons. The dogma is precise; it states—There is a Father; there is a Son; and there is a Holy Ghost. These three Persons in the Godhead form, so to speak, a family. They possess all the elements of happiness. Mark how much there is that is beautiful in the Blessed Trinity. Any attempt to explain this profound

mystery by the help of human analogies might be matter for edification, but could be nothing more.[1]

That God should become incarnate to save us, and should remain for nine months in the womb of a human Mother—"Thou didst not abhor the Virgin's womb;" that God should enter into "that foul thing, our body," as Luther termed it, is the most wondrous of all mysteries. That He suffered is less astonishing. Suffering does not involve the presence of moral stain. It does not debase; rather does it elevate and gain merit. Jesus suffered as man; He cannot suffer as God. And as regards Redemption: it is impossible to argue about mysteries which are incomprehensible to a finite reason. We cannot discuss the question how the Eternal Father, from highest heaven, witnessed the sacrifice of His Son yielding up His last breath from the Cross. The Apostles themselves could not understand it. Jesus declared His Passion to them—"The Son of Man goeth up to Jerusalem, where He shall be spit upon, beaten, and crucified, and the third day He shall rise again from the dead." This word, says the Evangelist, was hidden from them. They could not understand it. "Fellow Christians," asserts Bossuet, "our whole faith is a paradox. Our senses can understand nothing of it. What shall I say? Its effect will remain with us for ever." The Son of God, who is infinitely happy, annihilated Himself in becoming man. He has sought and He has loved suffering. When He spoke before His Apostles of His death, Peter, with his impulsive nature, replied—"Far be it from Thee, O Lord; do not let it be as you say." Jesus reproved him with some severity—"Get thee behind Me, Satan;[2] thou art

[1] See "A Manual of Catholic Theology," by Scannell and Wilhelm. It is a common practice to illustrate the doctrine of the Trinity by such analogies as light, heat, and the body of the sun, from which they spring, for each is spoken of under the same designation. Thus we say, the sun is bright, the sun is hot, and the sun is a body—light, heat, and volume being different attributes of it. In our memory, also in our understanding and will, we may find an illustration of the Blessed Trinity, though all such conceptions are necessarily very inadequate. A mystery is something "above our reason." We believe it, not because we see or understand it, but "because it has been revealed by God."

[2] This text is sometimes quoted as evidence that Our Lord, in addressing Peter as the rock, did not intend to convey the signification afterwards attached to His words, for Peter could not have been at one and the same time both the foundation of the Church and also "Satan, or the evil

a scandal to Me, for thou understandest not the things of God. Thou speakest as a man." Jesus seems to have treated Peter, at this time, as a tempter. That a Divine Being should have condescended to suffer in place of a finite creature, and of one so vile as man, is a mystery, at the very least, as impenetrable as the Incarnation itself. Nevertheless, there are in this mystery many very beautiful points for contemplation. The idea of the Incarnation is so strange to man, it reaches so far beyond the capacities of his limited conceptions, that it could have come forth only from the Eternal Wisdom. Within the interior thought and feeling of Christ two influences stood opposed; on the one side, the holiness of God in its tenderest susceptibility; on the other, the sins of men in their most subtle as well as in their grossest forms. There, in the immediate union of action between the All-Holy God and the Man Jesus, human sin was wept for, judged, condemned, as no mere man could have done. There holy tears were poured forth as we know not how to shed them. There was offered to God a moral reparation with a completeness that it was impossible for us ever to have attained. The most cruel of all deaths was recognised and accepted as the wages of sin. Such is the deep meaning of the drama of the Cross; and it is this that makes these hours of our Lord's martyrdom thereon to have been a moment of unrivalled import in the history of humanity.

The desire to justify this Divine intervention by scholastic reasoning, such as "Whether God could become incarnate, or whether He ought to have done so," is puerile. We do not even know what God is. He is altogether above our conceptions. As to theistic rationalists who reject the dogma of the Incarnation as irrational, and say that the proportion of things has been subverted, for that the end was infinitely unworthy of the means employed to attain it, we need only retort by the argument, that according

spirit. This lame reasoning is disposed of in Parkhurst's "Greek Testament Lexicon," p. 603, where it is stated that "Campbell renders the Greek word σατανᾶ by 'adversary,'" and observes that "though used by us as a proper name, it was an appellative in the language spoken by Our Lord. From the Hebrew it passed into Syriac, and signified no more than adversary, or opponent. The term is naturally just as applicable to human as to spiritual agents, and is, in the Old Testament, often so applied."

to these profound logicians, God should have remained eternally alone, and not have created any finite being at all. A finite being is so infinitely beneath God as to be unworthy of a place in the thought or act of the Divinity. It is far more comprehensible that, after creating a finite being, God should redeem him by an act of His Infinite love, and save from death the creature He took the trouble to create. Their objection tells much more powerfully against all spiritualism, than the Incarnation does against Christianity. One would imagine that the Deists must have placed a bandage over their eyes, when they dared to attack Christianity on this point. As soon as they begin to revile and ridicule the God of Calvary, it becomes easy to prove that their God of reason is not less compromised by their vaunted line of argument.

The doctrine of original sin is another grievance which the Theists bring forward against the Faith. But if this mystery is to be suppressed, we must, at the same time, suppress the idea of God, as well as that of good and evil. How, without asserting the existence of original sin, can we explain the avowal of St. Paul?—"I am carnal, sold under sin . . . for I do not that good which I will, but the evil which I hate, that I do" (Rom. vii. 14, 15). Who has not frequently heard this expression proceeding from the depths of a broken heart? Yet, without believing in original sin, how shall we explain this twofold nature in man, his love and admiration for virtue, and his almost irresistible inclination to vice; how account for the tears of the babe at its entrance into this life, the affliction of man as he departs from it, or all the calamities which weigh so heavily upon us during our troubled life on earth? Can an infinitely good, just, and merciful God take pleasure in the sufferings of innocent creatures? He cannot; and herein does this dogma cast a vivid light upon the dark problem of the existence of evil, although it does not explain it. It cannot be denied that man feels distinctly within himself how much the tuneful instrument given him by God has been injured. He remembers, as Plato so well expresses it, "the olden time when, in the brilliant light, he celebrated the divine mysteries." This tone of regret underlies all the ancient religions. A passionate

attempt to renew the severed bond of union between God and man still exists as the universal fact. Hence the search after an adequate expiation. The need of a deliverer of mankind is everywhere acknowledged—in India, in Burmah, in Thibet, and China. It finds a place in the legends of Gautama Buddha; in the Persian legend of Mithra; in Prometheus, the myth of ancient Greece; in the pagan god of Germany, more powerful than Odin, who was to save the world, and whom no one dared to name. The very universality of this idea proves that it formed part of the primitive belief of the human race.

Original sin, then, exists, but it does not explain the existence of evil. The question of evil is made still more difficult by it. How could God establish such an arrangement of solidarity as to cause the innocent to reap what the guilty have sown? Not only do the descendants of the prevaricator inherit the miseries which ensued upon his fault—concupiscence, suffering, and death—but they also inherit his moral deformity, and to such an extent that unless they are baptized they can never see God. "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter the Kingdom of God." Was it good to allow the happiness or misery of millions upon millions of human beings to depend upon the free-will of their first parents? Was it not, rather, a supreme evil? Why does God allow a violent tendency to evil to assert itself in the descendants of Adam, and through no fault of theirs?

How is that God, who, according to Christian faith, loved man to such a degree that He Himself became a man and died for men—how is it that He can endure to permit that the immense majority of mankind should neither know nor love Him? Reason rebels against such a thought. These are, indeed, grave difficulties, and it requires the whole force of the proofs of Christianity to enable us to admit such a dogma as this. Before we can believe it we must have the strongest possible conviction that God is infinitely just and perfect. "How incomprehensible are His judgments, and how unsearchable are His ways! For who hath known the mind of the Lord?" (Rom. xi. 33, 34).

Again, the doctrine of the Blessed Eucharist is another

stumbling-block to many, although it forms part of the Divine plan. In comparison with other Christian systems the Catholic faith is logic itself. An admirable connection exists between the mysteries and the Divine Sacraments of the Church. Jesus has laid down the doctrine of the Holy Eucharist for us in terms the clearest and most exact, which admit of no simpler interpretation in violation of the strict meaning of the text. He distinctly promised to give the Holy Eucharist, and He fulfilled His promise.

He promised it. A few days after the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves Jesus, alluding to that prodigy, said to the Jews—"I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is My flesh for the life of the world. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" This would have been the time for our Lord to dispel any illusion which the Jews might have formed as to His meaning. He should now declare the real signification of His words. Were they figurative, parabolic, allegorical, or to be accepted literally? His reply leaves no room for doubt as to His meaning—"Jesus said to them, Amen, amen, I say unto you, Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you. He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath everlasting life; and I will raise him up in the last day. For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me, and I in him" (St. John vi. 50, etc.). And after this many among the Jewish disciples were so scandalised by this language that they separated themselves from Jesus, "went back, and walked no more with Him." Such was the promise.[1]

[1] The Protestant method of explaining away this chapter, which is, throughout, so definite and clear as to be, one would have thought, incapable of misinterpretation, is to refer to the 64th verse as the key to the entire discourse. "It is the spirit that giveth life; the flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life." These words are alleged, by various sects, to signify that Christ's flesh "was absolutely unprofitable"—in fact, that they were intended to contradict what He had just said. Such exegesis is little short of profane, and cannot be sustained when the context is read with any care. "The Catholic Dictionary" explains the passage as follows, p. 344:—"Christ was to give His flesh for the life of the world, so that He could not speak

A year later, on the night of the last Passover, Jesus fulfils His promise and realises the prodigy. It was the night on which He was to be betrayed—*in qua nocte tradebatur;* it was on the eve of His passion—*pridie quam pateretur.* He declares to His Apostles that He is about to speak to them without figures. He takes bread into His sacred and venerable hands; He gives thanks, blesses the bread and presents it to His Apostles, saying—"Take, eat, this is My body." And taking the chalice, He gives thanks, and blesses and hands it to them, saying—"Drink ye all of it, for this is My blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for you and for many for the remission of sins. Do this for a commemoration of Me." On hearing this startling command, the Apostles, "those perpetual interrogators," as Bossuet calls them, answered nothing. They had been prepared by the words of His promise. They were in expectation of this gift, and therefore received it with the silence of love and adoration.

What matter if we do not understand the "how" of this mystery? The word of Jesus is explicit. As to its effect, who could doubt it? He who hides His Divinity under frail and ordinary bread, is He not the same who descended from heaven into the womb of His Virgin Mother? who changed water into wine at Cana? who by a word, by a

of this flesh as utterly unprofitable. His meaning is that flesh in itself, even His own flesh, apart from the spirit which God had given Him without measure (St. John iii. 34), and which was united to it, could not be of any avail. Nor, again, in the latter part of the verse, 'The words I have spoken to you are spirit and life,' does Christ contrast faith in His words with feeding on His flesh, for, apart from other objections, our Lord does not speak of His word generally, but of those particular words which He has just uttered, and which some of His hearers do not believe. The discourse in the synagogue had been a scandal to them, and our Lord declares that His words, far from giving any real occasion for scandal, were spirit and life to those who received them; the fault lay, not in Him nor in His words, but in their unbelief. This exposition is confirmed by the last part of the chapter." Clearly, the Evangelist did not think that Christ had softened down or explained away His mysterious promise, for he goes on to tell us that "from that time many of Christ's disciples went back and walked no more with Him," so that our Lord was constrained to ask the twelve Apostles if they also would go away. The Jews expected their Messias to prove His mission by miracles, one of which was that He should bring bread from heaven (see St. John vi. 30, 31). Christ reveals to them the true signification of their belief, showing Himself, who was born at Bethlehem ("The House of Bread"), to be the anti-type of the heavenly manna, the true bread of life. No other meaning can be attached to St. John vi. Nothing but the most obstinate perversity can provoke any such attempt.

gesture, restored sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, the power of motion to the paralytic? who raised the dead to life, Lazarus, after three days in the tomb, whose corpse had already begun to corrupt? He who commanded the seas, the winds, and tempests, and they obeyed? who cast out evil spirits? who, three days after His own death, rose again, removing the great stone from the sepulchre, though surrounded by its disconcerted guards?

This is He who has willed to conceal Himself under the sacramental species, where He now rests. "How I detest this folly of not believing in the Eucharist," said Pascal. "If the Gospel is true, if Jesus is God, what further difficulty is there?"[1] And M. Havet, commenting on this thought, adds—"No one hated more cordially than this great logician did those who believe only by halves, like the Protestants." "Oh, Christian soul, now thou art taught," says Bossuet, in his "Meditations"; "accept this instruction with as much docility and conviction as thy God has imparted it to thee, with full authority and distinctness. He says to thee, 'This is My body,' therefore it is His body. He says, 'This is My blood,' therefore it is His blood."[2]

In every age there have been men who have taken Jesus at His word. The holy Apostles believed in the Eucharist with their whole heart. St. Peter, St. Paul can never say enough on this point in their Epistles. The celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice can be traced back to the earliest times. They all persevered in the doctrine of the Apostles in the "communication, of the breaking of bread" (τοῦ ἄρτου),

[1] "Pensées," art. 25, p. 443.

[2] There have been, among non-Catholic Christians, more divisions of opinions and teaching on the subject of this Sacrament than on almost any other point of faith. Luther taught consubstantiation, *i.e.*, that the substance of Christ's body and blood was added to the substances of bread and wine; in which case Christ should have said, not, "This bread is My body," but "With this bread is My body." Zwinglius contended that the words were spoken figuratively, just as Christ used the metaphors of the Door, the Vine, the Good Shepherd, the Way, etc., in speaking of Himself. There is no parity, however, between these examples. Christ did not place His hand on a door, a vine, or a road, and say, "This is I Myself." When He spoke metaphorically the fact was always apparent. In the Eucharist He took up the elements, and declared them to be His body and blood. According to Zwinglius He should have said, "This is a figure of My body." Calvin taught that Christ's body "being in heaven and not here," could not be in the Eucharist. He should, therefore, have said—"This is not My body." But what our Lord did say was, "This is My body," and the Catholic Church has always maintained from the beginning that what He said was what He meant.

"and in prayers" (Acts ii. 42). Again, the disciples of St. Paul, as also St. Paul himself, celebrated at Troas, in an upper chamber where "there were a great number of lamps" (Acts xx. 7, 8, etc.). To affirm their faith in the Holy Eucharist, thousands of martyrs have offered their lives. They went forth to their death, having received within their heart Him whom they regarded as God. Tradition, represented by the ancient Liturgies, by the Latin and Greek Fathers, and by the Councils of the East and West, is unanimous in bearing witness to the belief of all Christians in this dogma. Guarded allusions to it inscribed on Christian tombs; drawings still preserved in the Catacombs; answers of the martyrs to their interrogators; explicit declarations such as we find in the works of St. John Chrysostom, St. Augustine, and other Fathers and Doctors; official documents, authenticated by Popes and Bishops—all these, with one consent, age after age, justify our faith and expose the contradictions of heresy and the denials of incredulity. The Fathers have instructed their children in it, and they in turn have taught it to the generation after them, until it has been handed on to our own day.[1]

This mystery, strange to say, keeps many believers in God and in Christ still outside of the Church. And yet, what sensible man can imagine that the mind of the Church has been awaiting the advent of a Berengarius, or a Calvin, to discover that nothing is present in the Holy Eucharist save the figure and the interior virtue of Christ? Can we conceive that such extraordinary blindness, or so great a folly as this would suppose, could have existed among so great a number of men famous for their learning and for their sanctity? Good sense forbids our admitting there could have been so protracted and so huge an error in the interpretation of the Word of God as non-Catholics venture to attribute to the Church. Let us rather say with Erasmus—"Never have we, and never shall we, be persuaded that Jesus Christ, who is truth and love itself, could have suffered His Church to remain for so many

[1] For a learned treatise on the faith of the early British and Saxon Churches, consult the Rev. T. E. Bridgett's "History of the Holy Eucharist in Britain." An excellent theological exposition of Eucharistic doctrine is also given by Father Dalgairns in "The Holy Communion."

centuries committed to an error so abominable as the adoration of a mere piece of bread."[1]

As for explaining the Eucharist, who shall attempt this? From first to last it must ever be a mystery.

He who endeavours to penetrate the majesty of God will be overwhelmed by His glory. The very greatness of the improbability here adds weight to the proof. If this great truth, which causes such alarm to our human reason, were not divine, it would surpass all our powers of comprehension how any man could have invented such a belief, and still more how he could have taught it to others. In like manner we may say that, had Jesus been nothing more than a man, it is absolutely incredible that any man would have accepted such a statement from His mouth. Observe, too, that it is not only the ignorant, not only women and children who believe in the Holy Eucharist, but the learned also—men thoroughly conversant with all the objections which have ever been raised against it.[2] When we find, at the close of the nineteenth century, the same ceremonies conducted in the civilised countries of Europe which existed in the Middle Ages — the priest carrying in his hands the monstrance containing a particle of bread, assisted by acolytes, with incense, lights, and banners, passing through the streets in solemn procession, and teaching by his act that "this particle is Jesus, the Eternal God"; when all this takes place a hundred years after Voltaire and the "Encyclopædia"; when, moreover, we find that other men, our contemporaries, critical and intelligent persons, who are acquainted with Voltaire and the "Encyclopædia," when they meet the priest carrying the Eucharist, fall down upon their knees and adore profoundly in all sincerity of soul, this is a circumstance that should make unbelievers reflect.

The Eucharist is that dogma which most of all implies

[1] Erasmus, "Epist. ad Ludovic. Barin." Catholics, all the Oriental Churches, the Egyptian Copts, the Abyssinian Monophysites, and the Dutch, German, and Swiss "Old Catholics," with the Anglican Ritualists, hold that, in the Eucharist, Christ is present, living, risen, and glorified; and that, consequently, He is to be adored. If His Real Absence is to be substituted for His Real Presence, the members of all these Churches are guilty of, at least, material idolatry, by adoring as God that which is nothing but bread.

[2] See Cardinal Manning's "The Blessed Sacrament the Centre of Immutable Truth."

the great power of God. The full appreciation of this truth carries along with it the admission that God is omnipotent. After consecration the substance of the bread and wine is annihilated, and yet its effects remain precisely what they were before. Take, for instance, the process of deglutition. The consecrated particle forms in the human body the quantity of blood proportioned to its weight; nevertheless, the Church affirms that the bread is no longer there, the accidents of bread alone remaining. When Jesus Christ communicated the Apostles, He was present, and He held His own body in His hands. God is present in each Host and in every part of each Host. He is present in every tabernacle, the very same in countless places at one and the same moment. "Upon the Cross," says St. Thomas, "the Divinity alone was hidden, the humanity, at least, was seen; but in the Eucharist both the Divinity and the humanity are veiled. Sight, taste, and touch are deceived, the Real Presence can be perceived solely through faith in the promises of Christ. I believe all that the Son of God has said." The Lutherans also believe in the Real Presence, but they assert that the bread remains, and afford this consolation to their reason. We who are Catholics cling blindly and tenaciously to the very words of Christ. He did not say, "*Here* is My body," but, "*This* is My body." The Eucharist presents the boldest challenge that has ever been offered to reason, and hence this mystery, which is certainly the most startling of all, is exactly that which most of all renders doubt impossible to me. It helps us also to understand what is meant by saving faith, that God stops short of nothing when He wishes to perform a marvel, and that He wishes to put our reason to a severe test. Finally, this doctrine well responds to our conception of God as Almighty, as being infinitely good, but yet desirous of proving our faith, and thus enabling us to merit heaven. The conclusion is that we ought constantly to seek in the Holy Eucharist that God whom we hope to see one day face to face in heaven.[1]

[1] Would that during life, and at the hour of death, we could think and speak with such deep feeling and sincerity as the late illustrious Archbishop of Lyons, Mgr. Ginoulhiac, who says in his will—"How much I have desired to make Jesus Christ known my few little works can testify only very imperfectly. How much I love Him and desire to see Him, He alone knows."

Another great difficulty with many persons is the dogma of Hell. This truth ill accords with any sentimental feeling in us, and it wounds the hearts of those who are attracted by the sweetness of the Gospel. The thought of eternal punishment, they say, sadly dims its brightness. For a slight inadvertence it would inflict eternal misery; for the fault of a moment, everlasting suffering. "To expiate an hour's sin requires all eternity," says Musset, in his "Espoir en Dieu"; while Victor Hugo exclaims, in his "Discours sur Voltaire"—"I will have none of your Hell." Another writes—"I do not like the God who created Hell." These words give expression to that which appears contradictory to all that we know of the attributes of God, and which reason finds it hard to reconcile with His Divine attributes.

At the same time, it is, up to a certain point, conceivable that God may punish, as a God should, the creature which exceeds all bounds in its revolt against Him. Does human justice determine the length or quality of the penalties it inflicts upon law-breakers in proportion to the length of time occupied by them in their infringement of the laws of the State? Does not human justice repress great crimes by inflicting penalties which last to the fullest limits in their duration? In exacting the death penalty it deprives the criminal of a good that all eternity never can restore. Yet when they act thus, men do not regard themselves as unjust. It is true that God did not create us to be unhappy, but as true that He did not create us to outrage His Majesty with impunity by deliberate violations of His laws. There are men who choose to live in sin until old age has bleached their hair and blanched their cheek. The hardened, impenitent sinner when he dies quits his sins, but not his attachment to sin. Besides which, we deny that God punishes by eternal pain "the sin of a moment." A man does not condemn himself to hell all at once. There are degrees of grace as there are degrees of sin. God takes no man by surprise. His patience with us is infinite. From these facts it follows that man, and man alone, is the builder up of his own misfortunes. Dante's "Inferno" describes the Demon, when tormenting a lost soul, as assuring him that his punishment is the

consequence of his own acts—"Thou knewest not, perchance," he says, "that I am skilled in logic?"

But there still remains this unanswerable objection—God is not a powerless Being. But hell, according to Christian belief, is a purely vindictive punishment, for it is of faith that there is no repentance for the sinner in the place of eternal penalty. By this penalty general morality is avenged, without doubt, but can it be said to satisfy morality as regards the individual? Is the soul of the lost improved by hell? We know that it is not. Therefore the pains of hell are not medicinal. Humanly speaking, we can pursue this argument further by granting that, although we defend ourselves against an enemy and may even slay him if he menace our life, yet no one would cause him to suffer simply in order to torment him. Neither can we affirm that, "were the punishment of hell temporal instead of eternal, all essential difference would then cease between virtue and vice, or that temporal punishment would be insufficient to restrain our evil instincts." Such reasoning would be neither serious nor sensible. Let us take the case of an hardened sinner. God causes him to suffer a long period of punishment in the other life. Is not morality sufficiently satisfied? Suppose that, after this proof, the unhappy sinner still remains unworthy of heaven. Instead of continuing his sufferings could not God annihilate him? And would not this be more than sufficient? Indeed, this objection might be pushed to its utmost limits, even so far as to say that God, being infinite in goodness, power, and intelligence, would have done better not to bring into existence free beings, who, He knew beforehand, would abuse their liberty. We see no answer to these objections so often advanced.

Hell is, in truth, from first to last a complete mystery. It finds its explanation in analogy, when taken in connection with other Christian dogmas. It forms part of the Divine plan. The marvellous history of Christianity is easily understood if this dogma be accepted. Without it Catholic teaching does not hold together: it becomes a castle built of cards which falls at the touch. If we could interpret what the Gospel teaches about hell as a corrective

punishment, such as we might almost wish to undergo, were it possible to sweeten the bitterness of the doctrine ever so little, the whole aspect of Christianity would completely change. When we remember that God, for one man's fault, and that man His own creature, descended upon earth and suffered martyrdom, the mystery of it is altogether inscrutable. We could not conceive that a God would come to save souls at so great cost to Himself if it were merely a question of rescuing them from temporal punishment, or even from annihilation. For we know that our Lord Jesus Christ suffered indescribable agonies to save the souls of men—"My soul," He says, "is sorrowful unto death. Oh, My Father, if it be possible, suffer this chalice to pass from Me!" He hungered and thirsted, He endured cold and destitution, He shed tears, He was betrayed by Judas, abandoned by His Apostles, scourged, crowned with thorns, derided in the garb of a fool, and given gall and vinegar to slake His burning thirst. He willed to die upon a Cross. The scheme of redemption, thus wrought out, is incomprehensible without the existence of hell. Apart from the whole plan of revealed truth, considered as a separate philosophical or religious question, such a dogma is repugnant to common sense. "The foolishness" of the Redemption would be senseless and without justification or necessity, unless it were to save man from hell, that is, from an eternal and altogether miserable destiny. We must listen to the voice of Jesus in the Gospel—"What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul?" "Narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there are that find it." "Strive to enter in at the strait gate." "Fear not those who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul, but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell." "I say unto you, Fear Him." We perceive from the Gospel that the thought of hell constantly preoccupied the mind of our Divine Lord. We need not representations of flames devouring the lost, and demons raging after their victims; these speak chiefly to the imagination. It were better simply to weigh well the solemn utterances of the Divine and all-merciful Jesus.

Many persons affect to believe, in order to silence the voice of conscience, that "God is too good to punish any of His creatures after this life, and certainly much too good to inflict unending penalties upon any." But the Son of God who came down from Heaven to earth, who sacrificed Himself, who shed His precious blood to redeem us, has declared over and over again that there is a hell, and that it is eternal. It is in vain that the insufficient knowledge of certain visionaries endeavours to soften to our eyes the terrors of the future life. Pay no heed to its foolish arguments. Jesus Christ, speaking of the wicked, said—"They shall be cast into the exterior darkness, where there shall be weeping, and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. xxii. 13). "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be cut down and cast into the fire." Speaking of Judas, Jesus says—"It would have been better for that man if he had never been born." And, referring to those who give scandal to the young, Jesus said—"It would be better for them that a mill-stone should be tied about their neck, and that they should be cast into the depths of the sea."

The impious tell us there is no hell. But Jesus says—"I have never known you, depart from me, ye workers of iniquity." "If your right eye scandalise you, pluck it out, and cast it from you, it is better that one of your members should perish, rather than that your whole body be cast into hell. And if your right hand offend you, cut it off, and cast it from you: it is better for you that one of your members should perish, rather than to see your whole body cast into hell" (St. Matt. v. 29).

The wicked assert that there is no suffering in hell; but Jesus pronounces it to be "unquenchable fire, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not extinguished . . . where every one shall be salted with fire, and every victim shall be salted with salt" (St. Mark ix. 41-49). "The Son of man shall send His angels, who shall cast the wicked into the furnace of fire, whereas the just shall shine as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father" (St. Matt. xiii. 43).

The blasphemers maintain that there is no hell, and yet Jesus describes to us the Great Assize of the General

Judgment. He tells us of the division of the sheep from the goats. He ranges the good on His right hand, the bad on his left; and on these latter He pronounces this malediction in these stirring words—"Depart, ye cursed, into the eternal fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." And He terminates His discourse thus—"These shall go into everlasting punishment, and the just into everlasting life" (St. Matt. xxv. 46). Is not this a clear but terrible solution of the problem of human destiny?

The parable of Dives and Lazarus, which proceeded from the lips of Jesus Himself, is equally profitable as a theme for our meditations (St. Luke xvi. 19). The rich man asked for nothing but a drop of water from the finger of Lazarus to cool his tongue. But that drop of water was refused to the miserable man. And the meaning of the Evangelist is evident. It was not for the commission of great crimes, adulteries, homicides, robberies, or the like, that the rich man was condemned to hell, but simply because he had hardened his heart against the poor. "The cheerful moralist," of whom M. Rénan so flippantly speaks, was this same Jesus, who was for ever uttering warnings of the terrors of Gehenna and hell.

The liturgy of the Church speaks likewise, to the same effect. Some of the strophes of the well-known sequence, the "Dies Iræ," are alarming in their realism:—

> Worthless are my prayers and sighing,
> Yet, good Lord, in grace complying,
> Rescue me from fires undying.
> . . . . . .
> While the wicked are confounded,
> Doomed to flames of woe unbounded,
> Call me with Thy Saints surrounded.
> . . . . . .
> Ah! that day of tears and mourning,
> From the dust of earth returning,
> Man for Judgment must prepare him,
> Spare, O God, in mercy spare him!
> Lord, all pitying Jesu Blest,
> Grant them Thine eternal rest. Amen.

Similar pleadings meet us in another well-known hymn, the "Stabat Mater."

After these citations it is difficult to deny the existence of hell.[1] It is all very well to try to console ourselves by saying that Jesus and His Church speak merely of a metaphorical hell. Our departure out of this life must ever remain a solemn and terrible moment, for Jesus Christ has affirmed the existence of an eternal hell, therefore we know that it exists. And this suggests another proof of the truth of the existence of hell. It appears to us morally impossible that our Lord Jesus Christ and His Apostles, who so much loved the human race, and whose words and acts alike breathe forth humanity and meekness, could have invented so truly awful a dogma, for the sole purpose of advancing their own ends. Humanly speaking, it is impossible that Jesus and His Apostles could have imagined such a belief, had it been untrue. The Gospel breathes nothing but goodness and love throughout. "My Father," was the prayer of Jesus, "I would not that one of those whom Thou hast given Me should perish." "I came to call not the just, but sinners to penance." "Those that are whole need not a physician, but those that are sick." "There is more joy in heaven at the conversion of one sinner, than over the conversion of ninety-nine just persons." Jesus says to Nicodemus—"God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, to the end that every man believing in Him shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life. For God hath not sent His Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world may be saved by Him" (St. John iii. 16, 17).

Unless a man is a confirmed atheist, he cannot convince himself that hell does not exist.[2] If we admit that there

[1] It is related of Voltaire that, on one occasion, a youthful sceptic called to see him, and in course of conversation said—"I have convinced myself that hell does not exist." "Ah!" replied Voltaire, "you are a lucky man, for that is more than I have been able to be sure of, after many years of laborious study."

[2] The wise man said, "The heavens are void!"
"But hell is full," the priest replied.

Victor Hugo here exhibits the two "extremes" which he rejects—the smooth-tongued positivism of the savant on the one hand, and the harsh dogmatism of the priest on the other. We readily understand that the high culture and the greatness of heart, which are attributed by all to Victor Hugo, would prevent him from accepting the disheartening theories of the sceptics. That Victor Hugo should, on the other hand, shiver at the thought of the regions of eternal anguish, in which the reprobate must suffer for ever, is also intelligible. But, unhappily, this feeling of

is a God, we are bound also to admit the existence of mysteries in Him. We have on one side a Being infinite in goodness, and on the other the same Being, who causes us to endure, perhaps during our whole life, the most grievous afflictions. We see children suffering horribly. How, and in what manner, can these children have deserved such misery? How can the infinite goodness of God be reconciled with such facts as these? There are certain maladies which cause such agonising pains that doctors are sometimes tempted to say—"Ought we not in conscience to put an end to the life of this patient?" How are we to explain that a God infinitely good, and infinitely powerful, has permitted that millions of human beings should, age after age, pass their mortal life in the depths of misery and brutishness, hardly able to obtain food enough to support life? This objection tells more powerfully against Theism than hell does against Christianity. It is much more difficult to harmonise these painful facts with the goodness of God, than to admit that God can make men suffer eternally in the next world. Whether we believe in God or whether we deny Him, it is undeniable that the principles regulating all things are very mysterious, though they do not involve contradiction. The essential point is to prove the facts. Unless we admit the Christian facts, we shall never believe in the profound mystery of hell. We can at least acknowledge that the whole Christian plan is strictly logical. On the one hand, a folly has been committed; on the other, an absolutely mysterious penalty is exacted. The truth of the Christian facts once granted, nothing is left but to acquiesce in them.[1] We can readily understand that in the Middle Ages, men, like the monks, who were full of faith, and who

repugnance does not convince us that the place and state of eternal woe are non-existent. We would as gladly as Victor Hugo escape the fear of an eternity of punishment, and it is precisely because the proofs of Christianity appear to us unanswerable, that we overcome the dread with which the dogma of hell inspires us, in order to submit ourselves to the teaching of our mysterious Master.

[1] "Retributive justice is the very attribute under which God is primarily brought before us in the teachings of our natural conscience. The great mystery is, not that evil should have no end, but that it had a beginning." —"Grammar of Assent," by Cardinal Newman, p. 415. See the article on "Hell" in "The Catholic Dictionary," also "Catholic Eschatology and Universalism," by H. N. Oxenham.

meditated on this terrible dogma of hell, were apt to be overcome by what is known as monastic *acedia*, a sense of despair which brought them to the verge of suicide.[1] The threat of future punishment, when heard by the sinner, generally deprived him of all rest. "There is now," says Lucretius, "no way, no chance of enjoying true peace, since when death comes we stand in dread of eternal punishment."[2] The sceptics of old resembled in this our modern doubters. The thought of hell tormented them. "The fear of hell," says Lucretius again, "fills all hearts with a holy horror of death, and leaves them no pure or unmixed pleasure. We have to uproot out of our minds this fear of Acheron, which disturbs the life of man to its very depths."[3]

Hence it is that not a Christian in the world refuses to admit the "sad dogmas of Hell and Purgatory," as M. Rénan calls them. There is not one, who, at the hour of death, sees not that awful vision before him, or does not embrace his crucifix, saying to it, O Cross, you are my only hope—*O crux, ave, spes unica;* or who does not, at that supreme moment, appeal to the mercy of his Saviour.

Recordare, Jesu pie,
Quod sum causa tuæ viæ;
Ne me perdas illa die!

There is not a single sincere Catholic who does not, in the words of Taine, "expect to pass a period, more or less long, in the great penitentiary of Purgatory." If the thought of Heaven is so full of sweetness as to attract us towards all that is good, the thought of Hell is the curb which checks our progress along the path of evil. Even the most highly disciplined minds seem to stand in need of these two influences of love and fear. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," the commencement of love for Him. Happy are those who do not drag after them a long chain of sins! Happy are those who have performed some good works to shield and protect them.[4] Pius IX. truly

[1] See Caro, "Nouvelles Études sur le temps présent."
[2] "De natura deorum," I. iii. 1112.
[3] Lucretius III. 39.
[4] Independently of the truly dreadful conceptions of hell which the Middle Ages have bequeathed to us, there is not a nation, people, or religion which does not possess its own peculiar ideas of the hideousness of

remarked to Cardinal Place—"The cause of all our ills is that no one preaches now on hell." Undoubtedly this dogma sounds harsh in our ears, but he is no Christian who disbelieves it. "Although I made you sorrowful by my epistle," writes St. Paul to the faithful at Corinth, "I do not repent; and if I did repent, seeing that the same epistle (although but for a time) did make you sorrowful, now I am glad; not because you were made sorrowful, but because you were made sorrowful unto penance. For you were made sorrowful according to God, that you might suffer damage by us in nothing. For the sorrow that is according to God worketh penance steadfast unto salvation; but the sorrow of the world worketh death" (2 Cor. vii. 8-10).

II.

Jouffroy boldly asserted, "Dogma suppresses thought"; and M. Taine, after him, has remarked, "Faith is an extraordinary faculty, which acts independently of, and sometimes to the exclusion of, our natural powers." "It may be permitted to some not to know the Catholic religion, but every one should at least know something of the history of the human mind during this century." This thesis, which debases reason in comparison with faith, was sustained in our day by a brilliant genius, M. Lamennais, and the Church condemned him, preferring to see him pass, with all his talents, over to the ranks of the enemy, rather than trespass upon the rights of human intelligence.

When confronted with Christian dogma, the Rationalists

hell. Rousseau declared—"I know nothing about it." Diderot places these remarks in the mouths of two persons—"What if I am certain that there is no hell?" "I defy you to be certain of it," says the other. Père Gratry narrates the following anecdote:—When a chaplain of the École Polytechnique was leaving the chapel, after he had preached a sermon before the pupils on the subject of "Hell," he met an official who had accompanied the scholars to hear the sermon. This man jokingly said to him—"Well, Monsieur l'Abbé, shall we be boiled or roasted?" The preacher immediately replied—"My dear sir, you will find that out for yourself." We have here a very simple answer for the man of faith to give to those who are so ready with their ridicule against God and His Church. Bid them meet you on the shores of Eternity. To quote the words of a Saint:

"They who with the Devil jest,
With Christ the King shall never rest."

take up the cry of Jouffroy. Perceiving, along with him, disagreement between the exigencies of logic and the postulates of dogma, they sacrifice dogma to logic. They find it impossible to reconcile original sin with the goodness of the Creator. That God should assume the nature of man appears to them as strange as the hypothesis of a circle assuming the nature of a square. They argue, to their own satisfaction, that they ought not to believe. They do not enter into the questions how and why others have believed; they have no argument to bring forward against the indisputable and colossal fact of a religion which has dominated the world for nineteen centuries, having imposed its dogmas upon the greatest minds, offering a complete solution of the different problems of life, and actually benefiting by all the incertitudes of simple argument. They have not maintained that, if the Christian dogma is not a Revelation, it is a merely human conception. Whether Jesus alone, or Paul and the Galileans invented it; whether ten or fifteen had a hand in fabricating it, is a matter of small consequence. One cannot believe that thinkers, so eminent as those who elaborated Christian dogma, could have sown amongst the truths of so grand a creed such startling inventions as Hell, the Blessed Eucharist, or Original Sin. These few points which so repel an intelligent unbeliever, ought, on the contrary, to have convinced him that the Symbol of Faith is, in truth, not of man's invention. So far from being a decisive reason for rejecting Catholicism, these dogmas should force the rationalist to admit that human reason was not the author of the creed of the Christian. What can it matter to the truth of Christianity that its dogmas are obscure, if its proofs are sound and certain; or that some individuals do not believe, when among the millions convinced are some of the greatest minds of modern times? "What matters it to the truth if investigation be necessary or even difficult, provided it is conclusive? Because Jesus was not born at Rome, it does not follow that He was not born at Bethlehem. And if Revelation is not written across the sky, is it not written in history? To oppose facts merely by arguments is the eternally fruitless method of doubt. Its ever increasing sophism is to bring forward its

'insoluble objections,' under the false assumption that they are unanswerable."[1]

We will not follow the example of those apologists who strive to excuse our dogmas by proclaiming that free-thought and private judgment are but little affected by submission to dogma. The Church, according to them, has in her wisdom promulgated only a very small number of articles of faith. It is true that, though there are chains which restrain our freedom of thought, they are not unnecessarily multiplied, and that the points which limit the action of the human intellect are very few in number. Still the difficulty remains, and the actual number of such dogmas matters little. If but one mystery existed, it would not the less be a mystery. And we may well say of all dogmas what Lessing said of Original Sin—"It is a pill which I have always found difficulty in swallowing." That we have but few dogmas to believe does not remove the difficulty, since we are unable to prove the truth of any one of them by and of itself, nor to solve completely the grave difficulties by which each is environed. But we have, through the use of the most rigorous scientific method, established the authenticity of the Gospels, which contain express mention of these dogmas; we have proved the authority of the Church, which has a right to our faith and adhesion, because she speaks in the name of the God of Truth; we have demonstrated the authority of Tradition, which hands down to us these dogmas as professed by the faithful from the very beginning of Christianity. The *How* we do not perceive, the *Why* is clear and convincing. There is no reason, therefore, in our crying out that these mysteries are inconceivable and therefore incredible. The only question is, all-impenetrable as they are, have they a Divine revelation for their origin? This is the decisive point. If Christianity proves its title-deeds, which, as we have seen, it most undoubtedly does, then no other course is left but to submit ourselves to its authority. "Sound sense and a right conscience," says the Abbé de Broglie, "require us to resign ourselves to the inability of solving certain problems, and to take our firm stand on the many powerful and

[1] H. de Cossoles, "Du doute."

convincing proofs which leave no doubt as to the divinity of Catholicism."[1]

Facts speak for themselves. It is the authentic Gospel which teaches us these facts. It is the entire universe, converted and Christian, which attests them. In regard of facts which are extraordinary and public, a man cannot deceive the whole world, nor can the whole world agree to believe in one individual. To tell the truth, those most imbued with the Christian spirit have neither been convinced by the beauty nor arrested by the difficulties of dogma in general. For them the truth of the history of our Lord Jesus Christ is above all doubt, and, therefore, in spite of every difficulty, they accept the teaching of the Church. They say—"After all, God is God; He is infinitely above all my powers of conception. My small reason is but a glimmering light by the side of God's intelligence. The designs of God pass beyond the limits of my intellectual view. I admit the most mysterious dogmas, because of my conviction that God has both spoken and has manifested Himself. When we have found an unanswerable proof we ought to hold by it, if we would ever know anything or have any guide to follow in this life." Those who thus reason are not only Christians by conviction, but they are men who have considered, with much breadth of mind, all the systems most opposed to their belief. In regard of others, argument is useless with those who contend that Christianity ought to be able to offer proofs that force the assent, if they will only tell the truth as to what they mean; it is equally useless with those who require that every possible historical, moral, or philosophical objection which can be conjured up should be made as clear as the daylight.

It is always possible to contest the proofs of a fact of which one has not one's self been the witness, though good sense would refuse to do so. Men are to be found who deny that Moses or Alexander the Great ever lived. Dupuy denied that our Lord and His Apostles had any real existence. Voltaire questioned the reality of certain Chinese towns. All this is, however, outside the pale of serious discussion. It is much more reasonable to start with facts that we know,

[1] "Le présent et l'avenir du catholicisme en France."

and to ascertain whether any human explanation suffices to account for them. It would be folly to hope that the proofs of Christian truth could be made so cogent as to force the assent of the mind. Christianity does not compel belief, and was never intended to do away with the free exercise of the will; it is easily seen that in its system God has willed that faith should be free, and even when God became man He did not make belief in Him compulsory. The proofs of the truth which He brought entered the mind through the senses, and yet, even among His disciples, some believed, but others doubted. "If I had not done among them the works that no other man hath done, they would not have sin; but now they have both seen and hated both Me and My Father" (St. John xv. 24). But this effort and this decision of the will are always matters of difficulty, especially in the time in which we live. St. Chrysostom and M. Rénan agree in their explanation of the cause of incredulity. "The human race," says St. Chrysostom, "is very defiant. No man can congratulate himself on having arrived at a decision about anything, because he may be disturbed by finding the opinion of a great number of people against him. As in these days the unmerited reproach was cast upon the faith that it did not admit of being demonstrated, or rather was a pure illusion; the great Apostle, St. Paul, shows very clearly in the passage commented on that the greatest actions are performed through strong confidence in some truth or other, and not as the effect of discursive argumentation."[1] M. Rénan expresses the same view when, in his own behalf, he writes—"I have to resist my fatalist advisers, my unrestful spirit, which, when the truth has been found, urges me to seek it anew; and my fancy, which, after reason has decided, disturbs my tranquillity and contentment."[2]

If, then, we find ourselves incapable of fixing our wandering thoughts, unable to triumph when struggling against the truth, and nevertheless unable to believe it, let us address to God the prayer of the father of the child possessed by the dumb spirit—"I do believe, O Lord, help Thou mine unbelief" (St. Mark ix. 23).

[1] "Homil. in Ep. ad Heb.," xxii.
[2] "Souvenirs d'enfance et de jeunesse. Prière que je fis sur l'Acropole."

III.

But even in the realm of faith we are not without clear evidence. Nothing can be compared to the magnificent inter-connection that exists between the Christian mysteries. The Catholic creed is a grand whole, possessing perfect interior harmony and accord. Its dogmas are linked one into the other after the most exact logical order. The Incarnation and the Redemption pre-suppose the existence of the Blessed Trinity. Were there not more than one Person in the Deity, God could not, at the same time, become incarnate and make satisfaction to Himself; it does not appear to us possible. Regarding these dogmas simply from the standpoint of reason, they render the doctrine of the Trinity easier to conceive. We do not say that the doctrine is made more apparent by means of these two mysteries, but it certainly harmonises with them in perfect symmetry. In like manner the Incarnation and Redemption suppose the truth of original sin, for it is the reason of their existence. We need not say, with Malebranche and some other theologians, that had there been no original sin God would, nevertheless, have become incarnate. Who can possibly know what God would have done? and, moreover, who could have imagined such an act of self-abasement on the part of the Godhead? On the other hand, we comprehend that original sin, understood in the rigorous sense of Christian dogma, is an evil which weighs down the race of Adam, not merely in this world, but in the next, and that it was this fact that caused God to take human nature upon Him and become incarnate. God could, undoubtedly, have redeemed man in some other way, had He chosen to do so, but when the greatness of the extent of our misfortune is acknowledged, it is comprehensible that He should choose thus to humble Himself for our sakes.

The Incarnation and the Redemption, then, are in complete harmony with the doctrine of original sin, as also with the general idea of sin, understood according to the Christian system. In it sin is identified with Satan and his angels, lost for all eternity through a single fault; with the whole human race committed to suffering,

sickness, evil inclinations, and death, because of a single sin. This notion of sin, with its frightful consequences, accords well with the notion of the incomprehensible God presented before us in the Bible, of a God infinitely sublime and holy. So that hell, we now begin to see, acts in reality as a vindication correlative to the enormous gravity of sin. If sin is what Christianity declares it to be, we can understand that there must and should be a hell. The idea of hell harmonises equally with the Incarnation, for had the wages of sin been nothing more than temporal punishment, or even annihilation, the Incarnation could not have been intelligible; whereas, to deliver even one soul from hell, we can understand our Lord's being ready to offer up the sacrifice in His own Person.

Then again, the extraordinary dignity of the Blessed Virgin is altogether in harmony with the Incarnation of the Eternal Son of God. It is not difficult for any one to admit that if Jesus is all that the Catholic Church teaches, His Mother ought to be all that the Church says she is. For such a Son, such a Mother, and no other would have been possible.[1]

The Blessed Eucharist enters no less into the Divine plan. Since God is omnipotent, the difficulties in this sacred mystery cannot shock a truly devout and thoughtful mind—that is if they are correctly understood.[2] This mystery is a magnificent corollary to the Incarnation. If be true that God was born and laid in a manger, and that He died on the Cross for men, there is no difficulty in supposing that He willed to stay with mankind during its terrestrial pilgrimage. There is nothing surprising in such an idea. The doctrine of grace is marvellously adapted to the Christian faith. God, in the Catholic system, is a Being who has never received anything whatsoever from His creatures, who has created all things,

[1] See "Difficulties of Anglicans," 2 vols., by Cardinal Newman; "The Immaculate Conception," by Bishop Ullathorne; "Mary in the Gospels," by Provost Northcote, D.D.

[2] For an accurate understanding, either of the Church or of any portion of her doctrine, it will be evident to the unprejudiced student that reference must always be made to the Church herself, and not to those caricatures which the malice or the ignorance of her enemies prompts them to substitute for the reality.

both good and evil, who has never taken or had need of counsel, who always acts with supreme independence, and who treats His creatures according to His good pleasure. Grace is God's disposition of salvation in His own way, and absolutely according to His will, after a manner which appears to us arbitrary. If we correspond to His grace, that very correspondence is the effect of His grace. When we have done all that is possible, we can only say in the words of Scripture, that "we are unprofitable servants." It is not, therefore, surprising that the salvation of the creature should depend absolutely upon God, since the soul itself, even in its correspondence with that plan of salvation, is wholly dependent on Him for everything.

And if Jesus, before leaving us in His visible presence, founded a Church, we may feel certain that He did not intend to abandon it, but would invest His successor with infallible authority. God could not permit error to prevail in the society which He founded.[1] The Catholic system is comprehensible; the Protestant system is not so.

In conclusion, we find the dogma of Heaven to be in complete harmony with the dogmas of the Incarnation and of Grace. Heaven does not answer to wages earned by man, but, as St. Augustine says, to "His own gifts, which God crowns for all eternity"—*Qui, coronando nostra merita, coronas dona tua.* Evidently our little good deeds, performed day by day, do not merit such a reward as this; we can obtain this reward only because God co-operates with us in meriting it. Our bodies have

[1] The difficulty experienced by Protestants in accepting the dogma of Papal Infallibility arises from their erroneous conception as to what the Church of God really is. This is very clearly seen in the wording of the thirty-nine Articles of the Anglican Church. Instead of defining the Church to be, as Scripture describes it, "the pillar and ground of the truth," the Divine teacher, which all must "hear," since "faith cometh by hearing," and he who hears the Church hears the voice of Christ Himself, the nineteenth Article describes the Church to be a visible "congregation of faithful men, in which the pure word of God is preached," etc., a description which any sect may well arrogate to itself. The Article goes on to declare that the Eastern, African, and Roman Churches have all erred in matters of faith. The twentieth Article suggests the liability of the Church to teach falsehood, since it declares that "it is *not lawful* for the Church to ordain anything that is contrary to God's Word written" —a thing which is impossible, not merely unlawful, in a Church of Divine origin and authority. The next Article declares that "General Councils may err and *have erred.*" This is a thoroughly human conception of a merely fallible Church. If the Church herself be fallible, it is idle to talk of the infallibility of her Chief!

been the temples of the Holy Ghost. Jesus has dwelt with us. No purely philosophical system can explain to us the glory of heaven. But we can understand its character very plainly if we regard it as the ratification and crown of the Life of God in each one of His unworthy creatures.

IV.

It must not be forgotten that the Christian system is an entirely original work, besides being extraordinary, mysterious, and, in many of its features, absolutely incomprehensible.

The Blessed Trinity is an altogether original conception. It is difficult, indeed, to imagine that fishermen, or one who was a carpenter, could have elaborated such a dogma, unless we can be so ingenuous or so simple as to believe that they frequented the Schools of Alexandria. If this doctrine is not Divine, we cannot conjecture how it could ever have produced itself in their minds. If Jesus be not God, how could He have imagined that He had God for His Father, or that a third Divine Person existed whom He Himself would send, as He had been sent by His Father? How strange that He should present to our minds an infinitely good and infinitely just God, who wills that the purity of our souls shall depend solely on the exercise of the free-will of another creature! What is also unfathomable in the system of Christianity is that God should have become incarnate to redeem so poor and miserable a being as man, while He, moreover, knew beforehand that this Incarnation and Redemption would be profitless for an incalculable number of men. How original a plan is this; how unparalleled a case that we should be required to believe in a God become incarnate, not for a being of any great importance, but for a mere worm of earth; a God who became incarnate, not only in order to lead the life of a poor man, but to redeem man by means the most sorrowful and ignominious possible. How strange that we should see God mocked, buffeted, and spit upon during His whole trial, and even until He had breathed forth His last sigh on the Cross;

all this for the sake of an effect which seems wholly out of proportion to the sacrifices by which it was attained!

We are in the presence of a God who is truly a man. Pilate was right in proclaiming, "Behold the man"—*Ecce Homo!* Christ had passed through all the stages of life in turn; as an infant, a child, a youth, a humble artisan, and yet followed by crowds as a son, a friend, a citizen, a prophet, a priest, a king, and a martyr. He had known and experienced all the struggles and difficulties of man's life. He had encountered on His life's journey all the thorns which have pierced and torn our own flesh, all the snares that lie in wait for us, and all those seductive influences which lead us astray and ruin us. The love of God for man, as portrayed in the Christian faith, is beyond all our powers of comprehension. To our poor finite reason it appears an act of infatuation. Celsus understood it when, as an ironical sceptic, he likened Christians to a set of frogs croaking in a swamp, and felicitating one another on what the Great God of the universe had done for them. He ridiculed this Divine favour of the Incarnation, according to which the Great and Infinite God, as our reason conceives Him, did astonishing things for man—for that being who, in the lowest depths of human degradation, has made himself so like to the very brute creation. And Celsus adds that, as regards the angels, who merited better treatment as being, according to the Old Testament, the most beautiful of all imaginable creatures, these were sacrificed by God without pity, and for their punishment He created hell, while towards man, on the contrary, who is but a very ordinary being and who has sinned, God conceives a most incomprehensible love, and devotes Himself to his salvation. "Behold, then," says Celsus, "how capricious your God is." [1]

Again, it is impossible to find a stranger dogma than that of the Holy Eucharist, according to which there is in the Sacred Host the God-Man, a man in human flesh and bone and soul, united to the Divinity, although this Host, as far as appearances and chemical analysis can tell us, is bread and nothing else but bread.

[1] "Origen contra Celsum."

What is without precedent in the Christian Heaven is the joy of the moral beatitude which is there possessed. In it we shall rejoice throughout eternity in infinite happiness, but it will not be that material selfish happiness promised in the celestial enjoyment of other religions. It will be the happiness of knowing the infinite truth—*gaudium de veritate,* as St. Augustine calls it—and the satisfaction also of being for evermore incapable of offending God. The Christian notion of Heaven is worthy of God, and manifests the moral elevation of Christian morality. It is far removed, indeed, from the Paradise of Mahomet, which is hardly anything better than a delirious idealisation of the harem, a continuation of terrestrial self-indulgence. Jesus told the Sadducees that in Heaven the blessed "neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the Angels of God."

It is not easy to imagine that man, in the midst of his miseries, and environed by the sombre horizon of life's stern realities, could have pictured to himself or invented the Christian Heaven, where happiness is absolute and unmixed. At the present time, when Christianity is arresting attention among the studious, many even pious souls find difficulty in professing their faith in the truths of salvation. This makes it all the more difficult to suppose that the idea of Heaven was not communicated to man by Divine revelation. The Virgin Mother, type at once of virginity and maternity, is in an equal sense the exclusive property of Christianity. No other religion ever possessed such an ideal. We alone, as Christians, possess this exquisite Being, of whose tender grace, purity, and dignity, as God's highest creature, the sweet remembrance follows us through all the seasons of the year, and, as it were, embalms our faith with its fragrance.

Once more, no doctrine, based on philosophical principles, or professing to be of Divine origin, has ever vindicated the rights of Conscience as Christianity has done. There is no teaching recorded by history—and this is the reflection of those who have studied the subject, such as Fustel de Coulanges and Jules Denys—that has raised the human conscience above the reach of coercion so efficiently as Christianity has raised it. In proof of this it suffices to

reconsider the sayings of Jesus, the Apostolic writings, and the entire Christian tradition. Would we assure ourselves that this fidelity to conscience was really carried out in practice, we have only to cast our eyes along the extended list of the martyrs. If we desire to be convinced that this astonishing doctrine is not simply a beautiful theory, we have only to recall the fact that Christian conscientiousness, in the first three centuries, which was, indeed, an insignificant power in presence of the colossal Roman Empire, nevertheless buried paganism and vanquished all the Cæsars. G. Boissier himself, though a disciple of Rénan, admits, in his "Fin du paganisme," that never in human history has there been a like record of the triumph of conscience over force. The martyrs were the first to prove that "where the empire of faith ends the empire of conscience begins,"[1] for a man may die, but yet remain free. Every martyr made the saying of the poet Juvenal his own—

> Summum crede nefas animam præferre pudori,
> Et propter vitam vivendi perdere causas.—Sat. VIII.

The Christian martyrs have never been outdone. Read their acts since the time of St. Paul, and mark how the attitude of the Christian conscience, when placed face to face with persecution, has no rival in the pages of history. The language of the martyrs in vindicating the rights of conscience and of thought fills us with admiration. A valuable volume might be composed of the testimonies borne to Jesus by the martyrs in presence of their persecutors; it would enable us to realise our Saviour's words—"When you shall be brought before kings and tribunals for My sake, trouble not yourselves as to what you shall say, for it will not be you who shall speak, but the Spirit of God who speaketh in you." This nobility of soul, this strength of will in the martyrs, stands out grandly from the pages of history. Courage, and sometimes magnanimity, have unquestionably been exhibited by non-Catholic martyrs, though not unmingled with the spirit of ostentation. On the other hand, according to Rénan, "the Catholic martyr is ever distinguished by

[1] Napoleon.

simplicity and humility." With him the consideration of his poor small personality does not weigh; he thinks solely of the rights of the truth for which he sacrifices his life. The vaunted martyrdoms of other religions were not suffered in the cause of truth, but only of those opinions which the victim believed to be true; not for facts such as the Apostles saw with their eyes, and in proof of which they offered up their lives. Is it necessary to recall the number of these Christian heroes? Among the great crowd of ancient sages, Socrates alone surrendered his life for his teaching. The number of Christians who have done this cannot be counted up. The variety and cruelty of the torments inflicted upon them by their persecutors surpass all imagination; and these sufferings have sometimes been eloquently described by the enemies of our faith. They died in different prisons without air or nourishment; they were devoured by wild beasts in amphitheatres; were broken on the wheel; they had their tongues and their nails torn out, and their extremities cut off; their bodies were either burnt or cast into the sea; they were covered with pitch and then set on fire, or roasted alive in iron cauldrons or on gridirons; they were stoned to death or crucified. Tacitus also narrates how they served as torches to light up the gardens of Nero. These victims were of all ages and conditions of life, and of both sexes. They exhibited the sublimest heroism and virtue in the midst of their torments, and they worked miracles before and after their deaths, many of them actually converting their tormentors. Nothing before had been witnessed like it. The most soul-stirring words ever uttered, except those which fell from the Divine lips of Jesus, were the last sayings of the Christian martyrs. St. Andrew exclaimed at the sight of the cross to which he was to be nailed—"O good cross, so long loved, and so long desired." To the jailor who tried to persuade St. Polycarp to renounce Christ, he replied—"Would you have me renounce Him whom I have served during all these eighty years, and who has never done me aught but good?" while St. Pothinus bade farewell to the governor of Lyons with the words—"I hope to meet you again in Heaven."

What the Christians did and suffered of old our own missionaries are doing still. But they believe in their faith after a different manner from the ministers of other religions. Their belief rests on the same foundation of certitude as did that of the first Apostles, a certitude which drives all scepticism out of the field, and brings forward into the clearest light the higher and independent origin of Catholicism.

V.

Another objection has to be met, which is all the more formidable inasmuch as it includes several others. Free-thinkers and other non-Catholics reproach the Church with having developed her dogmas by evolution. Bayle proposed this difficulty in the following subtle form—"Can God be the author of anything so complicated as are the various positive religions?" He is not speaking here of metaphysical complication, concerning which every one, whether Christian, theist, or atheist, would willingly grant all that could be said. Bayle felt a horror of metaphysics; he was gifted with infinite wit, and was by no means effusive in his expressions. The difficulty as proposed by him is this—"Can God, who is so clearly conceived by our reason, be the Author of a creed so complicated as is the Christian religion, a creed which, save in its leading doctrines, has been gradually expanded in the fierce heat of heresies, like the alluvial deposits of the geologist?" How are we to believe that revelation was not sufficient in and by itself, and that it required Popes and Councils to build, from time to time, fresh articles of faith upon the dogmas contained in the Gospel—of which St. Paul asserted that "God hath revealed them by His Spirit"—once for all.

Rationalists, and certain liberal Protestants who seem to approach their views, aver that the Church has added to the primitive faith a long list of superstitions—"indulgences, for example, charms, relics, the intercession of saints," and so forth. They try to show that it took three centuries to elaborate the fundamental

dogma of the Trinity. Tradition, according to them, is weak on the subject of Purgatory; and the number of Sacraments was not determined by the ancient Fathers, who drew no distinction between them and sacramentals. As regards marriage, before the time of Pius IX. it was generally taught that the priest, and not the contracting parties, was the administrator of marriage; now it is almost a point of faith that the two contracting parties are the ministers of the rite, the priest supplying only the blessing and authentication. The theory of the sacraments has therefore been progressive. Up to the year 1870 it was lawful to deny the dogma of Papal Infallibility; and, again, had not the early Christians as much right as ourselves to know for certain whether the Blessed Virgin was conceived without the stain of original sin, or, in one word, "immaculate," and whether or no the Sovereign Pontiff is infallible? for, indeed, had this latter dogma been defined earlier, it would have obviated the necessity of holding several Councils. Besides this, the decisions on the subject of grace have been very complicated.

Some cardinals were startled by them at the Council of Trent. The beginning even of the work of salvation does not come from us, but wholly from God. Yet something herein must depend upon ourselves, for, according to the Church's teaching, man corresponds to grace only of his own free-will. Correspondence, too, to grace is itself an effect of grace, while, on the other hand, it depends upon ourselves. Is there not a contradiction here? When, therefore, we say that Catholics have always believed the same creed and the same thing as regards each point, we may question whether this statement is exactly true.

Let us now reply to these objections. In the first place, we concede to Rationalists and Protestants that the secondary points of dogma have sometimes, among Catholics themselves, given occasion to certain abuses. But, even in the Church which He has founded, God has never been prodigal of miracles. Our adversaries know this well, and on this head they grant to God as modest a position as possible. That all these so-called additions are conformable

to the Christian faith, we shall now demonstrate in detail. The question is a purely dogmatic one, which has been often pressed with ability, though always with results advantageous to the Catholic Church. The greater number of the doctrines which Rationalists taunt us with having invented, are to be found illustrated in the Catacombs and in the writings of the earliest Fathers. If there have been, or are, abuses on certain points, the intelligent Catholic is no less scandalised by them than the Protestant. No Catholic is required to believe a doubtful or apocryphal miracle. No Catholic is bound, as an article of his faith, to invoke the Saints, for the Council of Trent simply declares the practice to be "useful," without imposing it as a strict obligation. Those Catholics whose temperament has a Protestant bias can address themselves directly to God without passing through His Heavenly Court. Such persons are not debarred from claiming to be Catholics.

In respect of the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity, Jules Simon, in his admirable book entitled, "Histoire de l'école d'Alexandrie," admits that it is false to attribute this dogma to the philosophical elaboration of the Fathers of the Church, as the result of their intercourse with the neo-Platonic philosophers. Mgr. Ginoulhiac has thoroughly established in his "Histoire du dogme catholique jusqu'au concile de Nicée," that the dogma of the Trinity goes back to the origin of Christianity. He proves, by a succession of Greek and Latin texts, and with admirable erudition, that the Fathers had a very precise idea of the Trinity. It may be confessed that this dogma had not acquired that studied precision which the negations of Arius evoked, but the dogma was, all the same, clearly marked out.

As regards Purgatory also, tradition has handed down to us passages altogether favourable to it. The word "purgatory" may not actually occur in the Patristic writings, but its equivalent is there in the urgent request of prayers for the dead. Evidently the Fathers believed that we could, by prayer, assist the departed in obtaining the complete purification of their souls from sin. On the other hand, they also believed in the truth of hell, and

they consequently believed in a state equivalent to purgatory.[1]

It is true that the teaching of the Church concerning the sacraments in general is somewhat vaguely expressed in the writings of the Fathers. Still, though the Church in that early epoch had not as yet elaborated any very learned system on this subject, it cannot for an instant be denied that those means of grace which to-day we call sacraments were, from the first, esteemed as holy, and as communicating grace to the souls of their recipients. Long before the ninth century the Western Church recognised the number of the sacraments as seven. If, in doing this, one of the great divisions of the Church invented the doctrine of the Seven Sacraments, the other, the Eastern separatists, would have been only too ready to reject so great a novelty. As to the actual minister in the sacrament of marriage, there has been a fluctuation of opinion in the course of time, as the point was never one of faith: but it is an undoubted fact that the Church has ever regarded marriage as a sacrament. Precise arrangement in the application of the matter and form of the sacraments is a scholastic question.

It is not easy to demonstrate the precise belief of the early Christians respecting the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. This much, however, can he clearly shown: the tradition can be traced back to a date before the rupture between the East and the West, and to-day the Russian and the Greek Schismatical Churches believe in the Immaculate Conception of the *Theotokos*, the Mother of God, as fully as does the Catholic Church. Certainly, those Churches did not borrow the doctrine from Rome. Hence we can be sure that it was held at a more remote period than the schism of the East. Criticism would, doubtless, desiderate precise documentary proof, although

[1] The Jews have never ceased to observe the primitive Hebrew custom of praying for the dead. It must, therefore, have been practised by Christ and His Apostles. Undoubtedly St. Paul prayed for Onesiphorus. And in 2 Machabees xii. 43 the practice is clearly recommended. Professor Friedländer, in his work on "The Jewish Religion," p. 43, writes—"The special prayers offered (at funerals) include: petitions for the wellbeing of the soul of the deceased, that it may find Divine mercy when appearing before the Supreme Judge." "A lamp is kept burning during the week, or the month, or the year of mourning, and on the anniversary of the day of the death," p. 495.

we find ground for the strongest presumption in favour of great antiquity in the belief of this dogma. In this direction we may well cite the splendid eulogiums, in many respects unsurpassed, which were pronounced upon Our Lady by St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, St. Athanasius, and St. Chrysostom.[1] This glorification of Mary has been so continuous, so confirmed, and so developed, as to give it the character of a dogma. Granted, then, her true position in the economy of the Church; granted that she gave her deliberate consent to the work of Redemption, it requires only a man of sound logical mind, even if he had no text to guide him, to have fully anticipated that definition of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception which this age has witnessed.

Papal Infallibility has already been treated of in a former chapter, and we have seen how strongly it is supported by tradition. Were we even to admit that the earliest Fathers did not acknowledge the infallibility of the Pope so distinctly as we now do, yet it is impossible to deny that they were most submissive to his commands. It must be observed that the Popes have never been regarded as only first among bishops; that they held themselves to be infallible; that Leo the Great, notably, spoke, in the fifth century, with as firm a conviction of his own infallibility as Pius IX. did in the nineteenth, a fact which greatly surprised Cardinal Newman in his Protestant days; and, finally, that the Patristic writings abound in passages which strongly support this dogma.[2]

The teaching of the Church on Grace may, at first sight, appear to some persons contradictory, but is, on the contrary, exceedingly profound. From a purely Christian standpoint, the Church can maintain her ground against all the sects. It is certain that in the sacred Scriptures grace is taught as the Church teaches it. In maintaining intact the

[1] See Fr. Hürter's "Theologia dogmatica." For references to other works on the subject, as well as for a *résumé* of the doctrine, its history, etc., consult "The Catholic Dictionary," *in loco.*

[2] See "Evidence for the Papacy," and "The Empire Church of Jesus Christ," by Hon. Colin Lindsay; "Faith of Catholics," by the Rev. F. Waterworth, S.J.; Mr. Rhodes's "The Visible Unity of the Church;" "Authority" and "Dependence," by the Rev. Luke Rivington; and, by the last-named author, "The Primitive Church and the See of Peter;" "Christianity or Infallibility," by the Rev. D. Lysons; "St. Peter and the First Years of Christianity," by Rev. Constant Fouard, etc.

dogmas of grace and free-will, the Church proves herself in the right, though opposed to all human systems. Scoffers may say, if they choose, that Christianity in this teaches what is absurd, but the Church represents true Christianity, and Scripture justifies her doctrine. The existence and necessity of grace are repeatedly affirmed in the written Word. Jesus Christ has laid it down—"Without Me you can do nothing"; "No one can come to the Father, unless it is given him from above." On the other hand, the power of the will to correspond or refuse to correspond to grace is clearly set forth. Jesus Christ always attributes to perversity of will the refusal either to believe in Him or to do right. Had He not come and spoken to the world, the world, He declares, would not have been responsible for its wickedness; but now, knowing better, it has no excuse for its sins. "Father, forgive them," was our Lord's prayer for His persecutors, "for they know not what they do." Our Lord here founds His plea for them on that lack of true freedom which was the result of their blindness. The parable of the talents supposes liberty of action, and Holy Writ praises the man who could, indeed, transgress the law if he chose, but refrained from doing so.

Again, Justification is the exclusive work neither of God nor of man separately. The act of the one and of the other must be present, and must unite to produce it. God acts by grace; man through his will. Grace implants faith; man's will creates merit. Hence, though justification be freely given, man must co-operate in securing it. A man cannot believe well and yet act amiss. He cannot be a Christian in his speech only, and not in his actions. His works attest the activity of his faith, as the leaves do that of the plant. Is it conceivable that these seeming contradictions are simply the result of man's devising? Do we not know that this problem of the apparent contradiction between grace and free-will exists just as much in the philosophy of deism, where it is still more inexplicable, because no means are employed for explaining it other than human reasoning?[1]

[1] Fénelon, in his "Lettres sur la grâce," and the Abbé de Broglie, in his "Le libre arbitre et la grâce," have written the most that can be said on this question. See also "The Philosophy of Theism," by W. G. Ward.

A philosopher of that school who seriously discusses the question of causes, will easily glide into Pantheism. Is it, as a matter of fact, possible to reconcile an infinite and absolute causality with secondary causes distinct from it? How can we reconcile the statement that there are finite beings, really distinct from God, with this other statement, that God is absolutely and entirely present everywhere? Finite beings are either nothing, or they are something. If they are something, then God is not absolutely omnipresent. Since, having fathomed the depths of philosophic questions, we are, nevertheless, like Janet, Frank, Simon, and others, still able to believe in God, we can also believe in grace and in man's free-will, and yet believe that God is the Author of all things. No philosopher has been able to solve the mystery of the contradiction that lies in this. Rationalists meet these difficulties only by forming rationalistic conceptions regarding them. They have never seen God. We Christians, on the contrary, know that Jesus exists, and that He has solved all such problems. If Christ and the Apostles were not impostors, we have certain evidence that they taught the existence of grace and free-will, therefore the question depends entirely on the truth of the Christian evidences. Let not deists and others henceforth talk to us of the difficulty of admitting the mysteries of the Christian faith, for only in that faith do we encounter difficulties that can never cease to be mysteries.

It is furthermore said that evolution has taken place in Christian dogma, and that our doctrines are complicated.[1] Well, what of that? Undoubtedly, if dogma had been formulated immediately, and, if catechisms of the second century only had been transmitted to us, we should be in a stronger position than we are now. But can we find in the complicated character of Christian symbolism, or in its evolution, any decisive argument against Christianity? Decidedly not. The facts on which it is built are so well established that no improbabilities whatever, supposing that they are really there and are detected by us, can, in any degree, destroy the certainty of the supernatural

[1] See Cardinal Newman's "An Essay on Development."

character of the origins of Christianity. This objection is not made on the ground that no miracles were wrought when Christianity began, or that Jesus is not God, for these points are not denied. Jesus most assuredly, in the silence of the night, and within the closed doors, announced before His death to the twelve whom He had especially chosen—"The Holy Ghost shall come upon you, and shall bring back to your remembrance all things whatsoever I have told you." He thus indicated the Divine assistance which should attend their future preaching, the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and their recollection of Christ's personal instruction, imparting to them the right to explain and unfold the fruitful deposit of His revelation.[1]

"It was not the Council of Nicea (325) that was the source of the dogma of the Divinity of Jesus Christ," says Mgr. Besson, "it was the fact of the Divinity of Jesus Christ, believed in by the Church, which gave rise to the decree of the Council of Nicea. It was not the Council of Ephesus (431) which imposed upon the Church the dogma of the Divine Maternity of Mary: it was the Divine Maternity itself, already believed in and proclaimed by the Church, which led to the holding of the Council of Ephesus. Why were the dogmas of Penance, the Holy Eucharist, Purgatory, and Indulgences affirmed by the Council of Trent? It was because the bishops, assembled thither from all parts of the world on that occasion, met together to declare what was the constant, unvarying faith of their flocks everywhere on these points." We may ask, why was the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception defined by Pius IX. in 1854? It was because eight hundred dioceses, in all parts of the globe, demanded the definition of what the Old and the New Testaments clearly taught.

[1] It is commonly supposed that the Catholic Church invents new doctrines from time to time, which she then imposes as articles of faith. This is manifestly absurd, and it flatly contradicts her own teaching. Legitimate development in dogma simply means the clearer enunciation or setting forth of the truth as it was revealed by Christ to His Apostles. Definition is the formal declaration by the Church in union with her visible head, or by this visible head alone, that such and such a dogma must be believed, because it was revealed by God. A dogma is defined because it is true. It does not become true because of the definition, it simply becomes *de fide*—that is, it must be believed, and cannot be questioned or denied, under pain of heresy.

May we not venture to say that, supposing the Darwinian hypothesis to be true, not indeed in those matters which contradict the faith, but in its general aims and tendencies, it is possible for God to have chosen to follow the same order in revelations which He has followed in nature, when He developed His creation by evolution? And in point of fact, during the old dispensation up to the time of the coming of Christ, God did continue to enlighten mankind by more and more complete successive revelations. According to our manner of looking at things, we do not understand how God could reveal Himself or His will to man on the principle of evolution. Our conjectures may count for something, but they do not form an incontestable evidence of truth. Before any argument against the idea of evolution in religious faith could be decisive, we should have to prove that the Church has accepted, in succession, as revealed, doctrines which contradict one another. It is irrelevant to argue that individual theologians have differed in the exercise of their private judgment on various points. As long as nothing has been distinctly defined on a particular point, theologians are left free in their opinions.[1] When Catholics maintain that they have always believed the same thing, they mean that, from the very commencement of the Church's existence, Catholics have always believed in the same general and fundamental truths. They have, for example, always believed in God, in Providence, in a future life, in Heaven and Hell, and even in Purgatory. They have always believed that God became man, and accomplished man's Redemption; that in God there are three Persons; that our Lord is present in the Blessed Eucharist; and that heaven is attained by God's help. The strong point in all this is that every one of the chief articles of faith was clearly and precisely held from the

[1] Some shallow amateur controversialists, such as Littledale in his "Plain Reasons," make much capital out of a complete misapprehension of the clause in the creed of Pope Pius IV. which says—"Neither will I ever take or interpret the Scriptures otherwise than according to the unanimous consent of the Fathers." This is taken to mean that Catholics are to look for the unanimous agreement of the Fathers in their interpretation of any given passage of Scripture as its only true meaning. The real signification of the passage is that a Catholic may not interpret any passage of Scripture, or admit any interpretation, which contradicts the Fathers when they are unanimous. Their unanimous interpretation must be regarded as decisive whenever it occurs.

first. The successive definitions of dogma have always been made, as St. Vincent of Lerins declares, *in eodem sensu eademque sententia.* Newman did not fail to perceive in this fact their divine character. He could not comprehend how it was possible that in an institution so vast as the Church there had never been any drawing back or contradiction in the process of development. In any other system such uniformity is unknown. That which one Protestant Convocation or Synod asserts, another denies. But the Catholic Church has never withdrawn a single decree. In no instance has a new definition contradicted any former one. It is the Divine guidance alone that can explain how, in a Society which has always encouraged the free discussion of philosophical and theological problems, dogma remains, nevertheless, firm and immovable.

The facts before us refute every possible objection which the finite reason of man may raise from time to time. Seeing that I cannot doubt that Jesus wrought miracles, and that He was sent into the world by God, it is only reasonable in me to admit, in spite of every difficulty, the Divinity of His religion. M. Rénan himself confessed that he had never been "impressed by any speculative objection floating in the metaphysical atmosphere." Mysteries were never any difficulty to him. Even the famous *Syllabus* of Pius IX. did not cause him the slightest trouble. With him the whole question was one of criticism. He understood perfectly that if the Church were once admitted to be divine, her doctrine must at all times and everywhere be divine, and therefore not to be disputed on any point. With him the Church was either entirely true, or entirely false. He could never have so sacrificed his logic, or his theology, as to become either a so-called liberal-Catholic, or a Protestant of any description. When Monseigneur Dupanloup suggested that he should see M. Guizot, with a view to an alliance with French Protestantism, he merely smiled. He said that he could not understand Guizot's position, for in his eyes a Protestant was no better than a base-born child of Catholicism. Rénan felt convinced that there was no standpoint for a religious system outside the Church. Hence he became a kind of Christian idealist, rejecting all definite doctrine, and accepting only

what appeared to him logical in Christianity as he viewed it.

VI.

Certain objections raised by our adversaries against the character of Christian dogma in general have still to be answered. Some unbelievers adopt a contemptuous attitude, and profess pity for the intellectual weakness of Christians. Others profess to admire the founders of the Church and the morality of the Christian system, but they recoil from the mystery of the Cross.

Let us hear them in their own words. Schérer, explaining his view, says—"We have reached a period in which society is composed of a minority of fervent and narrow-minded Christians, and a majority of intelligent unbelievers." About thinks that "a day will come when young Christians will begin to realise that two and two make four." This school of infidelity expresses a feeling of profound pity for poor Christians who are such fools as to flock into their churches for worship. These unbelievers adopt the language of the Pharisees of old, after they had sent emissaries to try to take Jesus by surprise, in some unguarded utterance which might place Him in their power. Those, however, who were sent returned without accomplishing their mission. "Never did man speak as this man," they acknowledged. But the Pharisees only replied—"Are you also seduced? Hath any one of the rulers believed in him, or one of the Pharisees? But this multitude that knoweth not the law are accursed" (St. John vii. 47-49). The Pharisees of modern, as of ancient, times would fain persuade us that the common people are credulous, whereas only those of refined and cultivated minds can be free from error. But even if we admit this distinction, does it follow that no Christians are highly cultured men? What grander souls have there ever been than St. Paul the Apostle, or St. Augustine? and has not every country possessed its men of sound logic, strong, good sense, of clear discernment and prudence, and of practical knowledge of life, who have not the less been good Catholics?

If such men as these, placed in circumstances which

enabled them to read books of every kind calculated to enable them to form a right judgment, after weighing well the arguments on both sides, have been able to arrive at a definite conclusion, and to become ardent believers, surely our opponents must admit that there remains something to be said on behalf of the faith which they consider so utterly contemptible.

Moreover, several of the boldest and most daring Protestants, in Germany, France, and England, have arrived at the conviction, after free inquiry and in the unrestrained exercise of their private judgment, that the Christian facts are true, and that the foundations of Christianity are impregnable. The belief of thinkers and critics of this class proves very well that, though the proofs of Christianity may be assailed, they cannot be demolished. Hence the fact that some learned men do not believe in it is by no means a conclusive argument against Christianity. If all learned men who had studied the question deeply became convinced that Christianity was nothing but a legend or a myth, it would be a different thing. But since we find men, equally learned, ranged on the side of faith, it becomes evident that the legendary character of Christianity has not been proved. Moreover, even had no historical difficulties existed, the truths of the Christian faith are so improbable and so startling, that men would naturally be inclined to doubt them. The proofs, then, which have induced these men of eminence to triumph over all temptation to doubt, must be so peremptory and decisive that they felt themselves called upon to despise the most serious objections, whether historical or otherwise, which can be arrayed against the Christian revelation. Wherefore, also, the Christian facts on which these proofs rest must be solidly founded before such objections as the existence of evil, and the act of God in creating beings, destined, as He knew, to eternal punishment through the abuse of their free-will, could have co-existed with that firm and unimpeachable certainty which characterised the faith of earnest but thoroughly-informed Christians from the beginning of the Church. To them all the objections were well known, and if such men as a St. Peter, or a St. Paul, St. Justin Martyr

Irenæus, Polycarp, Athenagoras, and others of undoubted intelligence, have adhered to the faith with such firm conviction, it is clear they must have felt that the Christian facts on which it rested were true.

Alas, it too often happens that the secret of the opposition to Christianity may be traced to human hatred of restraint, pride, and self-conceit, all passion incapacitating men for embracing the foolishness of the Cross. In the eyes of such, the beautiful dogma of the Incarnation is no more than a stupid myth. Can man, then, judge what is really worthy or unworthy of the dignity of God, or determine the limits of the possible or the impossible? Does he not perceive that the most ridiculous of all pretensions for science to make, is precisely the arrogant assumption that man is the true measure of all things, whether in heaven or on earth. Montaigne says that "really learned men resemble the growing corn. So long as the ear is green and empty it stands erect, waving its head boldly and defiantly in the air; but as soon as it is ripe and filled with well-matured grain, it begins to humble itself and bend its head toward the earth." The true attitude to take in matters so grave is certainly not that of the green corn. "Peradventure thou wilt comprehend the steps of God, and wilt find out the Almighty perfectly? He is higher than the heaven, and what wilt thou do? He is deeper than hell, and how wilt thou know? The measure of Him is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea" (Job xi. 7-9).

It is said that "people do not now believe in the supernatural"; but who, we may ask, constitute the "people"? Abstract from their number those who supply units to the whole, but not one grain of increased authority; then group on the other, not indeed the mass of believers, for mere number does not carry authority with it, but those whose deliberations and studies have either converted them from unbelief or have regained them to the faith; for their success in this would compel all fair-minded unbelievers to admit that the question has at least been by no means ultimately settled. We are not of the number of those who fear to be isolated in our faith in the

midst of its many enemies. We feel that calm consideration is necessary for gathering together our reasons for believing, as well as courage to announce those reasons freely. Among our free-thinkers, how many are there whose thoughts are really free, or who have not committed themselves to the acceptance of negations, in precisely the same way as they accuse us of accepting faith? If free-thinkers would have us cast aside Christianity, they should also reject their traditional scepticism. Perhaps they might then see no philosophical impossibility in rendering a free obedience to the Catholic tradition, and in returning to it should they have abandoned it.

In the case of those who tell us they admire Jesus and the Apostles as incomparable men, but that they cannot accept Christianity, how can such mental aberration be justified? For if no true miracles were wrought in the beginning of Christianity, Christ and His Apostles were impostors, and instead of admiring, every honest man should despise them. Those fishermen must have invented impudent falsehoods for no other purpose than to laugh at us. They tell us that their Master performed extraordinary miracles, that He healed the man born blind, that He raised a man to life who had been dead three days, and that three days after His own death He rose again. In imposing their narratives upon the world they exceeded all bounds when they said—"That which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, we declare unto you." As the crowning point in their audacity they asserted that this man, who was their Master, was not merely a man, but also God and the Son of God. If such stories were the inventions of a set of lying forgers, we should certainly be wrong in entertaining any sort of respect or admiration for them. They would deserve nothing but our contempt. And as to Christ Himself, we are logically compelled either to adore or to revile Him. There is no other alternative, for He called Himself the Son of God. If he were no more than a man, such as the Jews of to-day declare Him to have been, He was not only the destroyer of the ancient Hebrew monotheism, but He was also the originator of a new system of shocking idolatry, which has continued

uninterruptedly during nineteen centuries.[1] He is responsible for all the crimes committed in His Name, for the blood of the martyrs, for the religious wars with all their excesses, and for the torrents of blood shed during the Crusades. If He was not the Messias, as He declared Himself to be, He was indeed a being whose criminality baffles description. He frustrated the hopes of an entire people, and deceived mankind by advocating self-sacrifice. As Musset says—"If no other life exists, we may as well make the best we can of this one." To ask us to renounce all pleasures, and to carry the cross and embrace "the Religion of Sorrow," if redemption is a fable, is a crime on the part of Him who exacts such conditions, and an act of folly on the part of him who submits to them. A Christ who is merely an historic figure, with no supernatural character about Him, and who is at the same time worthy of our esteem, is an impossible conception. To such a Christ the Arabian impostor would be infinitely preferable.

To sum up, our line of argument is, in another respect, both more solid and more serious than that of unbelievers. They always seem to say to us—You Christians are labouring under a delusion. Allow us to indicate the weak points in your system. Our reply is this—The objections you propose are not new to us; our answer to them is ready; but how do you, in your turn, answer our

[1] The Jews have always acknowledged the historical facts of the existence of Jesus and His overthrow of their system. In their blind hatred against Him they are the most important witnesses to His life, death, and success. It is their profane custom to place Him on a level with the arch-impostor Mahomet, who formed his sect upon the Jewish and Christian revelations, assisted by apostates from the Church, six hundred years after Christ.

"In refuting arguments," says Mr. Friedländer, "brought by Christians and Mohammedans against Jews and Judaism, and rejecting the Messianic claims of Jesus and Mohammed, Jews are ready to acknowledge the good work done by the religions founded by these men . . . in combating idolatry and spreading civilisation."—"The Jewish Religion," p. 216. But surely, from the Jewish point of view, the worship of Jesus is the height of idolatry! Again, he says—"Jesus the Nazarene, who imagined that He would be Messiah, and was killed through the court of law, is alluded to in the book of Daniel (Dan. xi. 14). . . . Jesus caused destruction by the sword to Israel, the dispersion of those left, and their humiliation; He changed the law and misled many people to worship a being beside God. . . . Almost all people have, through them (Jesus and Mohammed), become acquainted with the idea of Messiah, with the words of the Torah, and the Divine precepts. Through them the knowledge of the Bible spread, even unto the remotest islands, and unto many nations," p. 228.

difficulties? You take refuge behind such oracular statements as these:—The supernatural is impossible; there are no miracles except for those who are already believers;[1] religions are of spontaneous growth; if a revelation exists at all, it ought to be written across the sky! Now, you know very well that this is no answer. Nor can you pretend that our faith is due to ignorance of the difficulties you oppose to it. These difficulties we already know. We can give expression to them just as well as you can. Consequently, if your objections do not destroy our faith, it is because it rests on a secure foundation. We do not imitate the ostrich, which buries its head that it may not see. We look your objections boldly in the face. They come to upset our position, but fail to do so. We maintain our ground unshaken, because our house is built upon the rock.

[1] Göethe says, in Faust—"Miracle is the well-loved child of faith."

CONCLUSION.

"Either Christianity exists in the Church with infallible authority, or there can be no Christ, no Church, no worship, and no religion."—"Die Halben und die Ganzen"—Eines Treitschrist gegen die H. H. Shenkel und Hengstenberg. Berlin, 1865.

Cardinal Newman maintained that human reason could never find any halting-place between the Catholic Church and scepticism. He was of opinion that popular creeds and religions founded on private judgment may be attractive and imposing in their day; national religions may produce a striking effect and yet have in them no supernatural life; they may hide the sun's light from us for ages, distracting the attention or embarrassing the judgment of men of research; but in the end one finds out either that the Catholic religion is really and truly the visible indwelling in the world of the invisible and supernatural life, or that, failing this, nothing positive, dogmatic, or real is left to enlighten us as to our origin or future destiny. Renounce Catholicism, and you become at once Unitarians or Deists, Pantheists or Sceptics, by a terrible but irresistible necessity.

This thought, being the conclusion reached after long study by one of the most profound of English religious thinkers, we should carefully make our own; it is also the conclusion strongly urged upon us by all that has been said. We do not require to point out to the reader its great importance. It places two alternatives before us: either, on the one hand, the knowledge of what we really are, what should be our chief aim during this life, and whither it is conducting us; on the other hand, the feeling that we are being moved to act without the knowledge of the true meaning of life, and are driven

hither and thither by contradictory impulses of our nature. The nobility of our soul, and the influences of education, and, perhaps, also of heredity, incline us towards good and towards virtue; whereas our animal passions and the influence of scepticism drag us down to the lower level of self-indulgence, hardness of heart, and self-conceit. A man gifted with intelligence ought not to yield himself up to this fatal ignorance of the true end of life, or to those contradictory impulses of his nature, without having formed a deliberate judgment regarding them.

Christianity alone answers definitely and fully all the questions which disquiet the human understanding. It does not present to us its solutions as mere probabilities, but as sure facts. It tells us plainly that the world is not its own first cause; that it is brought into being by a supreme cause, both intelligent and free. The origin of things is not some "insentient, unconscious germ developing and perfecting itself in the course of ages by virtue of a force latent within it. It tells us that this first cause is God; that this God is One in His essence and Threefold in His person; that He is a Spirit—eternal, all-powerful, free, infinitely just and good. It affirms that this creative cause does not stand aloof from us or from our actions; that the Infinite is not an impersonal idea; that He is the living God, the Father, Master, and Lawgiver of the human race. It teaches us concerning God that the Son, who hath seen Him, hath told us what He is—*Deum nemo vidit unquam; Filius unigenitus ipse enarravit.* And what am I? I am the creature of God. "It is He who hath made us, and not we ourselves"—*Ipse fecit nos, et non ipsi nos.* He has formed me. I, the child of God, composed of a body and a soul, am a responsible being, having before me "life and death, water and fire," as saith the Scripture. This means that I am free to choose between good and evil. Christianity tells me that religion and virtue are not merely subjective, a certain manner of seeing and feeling, not merely the emotional fancy of a delicate conscience.

Again, what private devotion and public homage do I owe to God? The Church lays down with infallible precision the complete rule of our duty in this respect.

It is not a question of mental deduction. Our obligations are specified in the Decalogue and the commandments of the Church, in the commandments sanctioned by the authority of Jesus Christ Himself, who requires us to obey the Church in everything as we would Himself—*Qui vos audit me audit.* Christianity tells us that this life is not a venture without a hereafter, but a trial and a preparation for what is to come. I know that if I do evil I shall go to hell; if I do good I shall go to heaven. My future life is not expressed by a *perhaps.* Its true character is founded on the clearest statements, made solemnly by One who, as positive facts prove to us, did certainly come from the other world, and has returned thither. He knows it, for He has seen it. Beyond the limits of this world, there is, then, assuredly another life which explains the mysteries, the contradictions, the inequalities of this one, and which atones for its injustices. As regards obscure points, the Christian is convinced that all will be made clear one day. He is not troubled on account of them, since it is God who has spoken. He looks not upon each one as a mere doctrine, but a living word, proceeding from the Man-God, the Revealer of invisible realities. "I have made known to you," says Jesus, "all that I have learnt from my Father." "He who believeth in the truth, heareth My voice." There is, then, no question on which Christ has not thrown light. Tradition pointed to God; Christ declared Him. The human conscience had a distinct presentiment of immortality; tradition vaguely looked forward to it; Christ affirmed it. The sighs of the poets have been satisfied. In the same manner, to the mind which has once grasped the "folly of the Cross," that folly which only astonishes and scandalises the shallow-minded, all the contradictions of life become explained, all its troubles calmed, all its sufferings soothed, all the dispensations of Providence, whether severe or merciful, are justified, and everything which separates man from God disappears. As Tertullian wrote—"We must not expect any other teacher after the Gospel."

Rationalists make some astounding acknowledgments on this point. "The Church has," says Jules Simon, "an

answer for all the questions which concern us; she assigns to man his origin and his end; that is everything which is needful to him for the direction and the consolation of his life." "She unites the deepest metaphysics to the most perfect, and if one can say so, to the most efficacious simplicity. It is only the Christian religion which possesses both the 'Summa' of St. Thomas and the Catechism." "Whatever opinion we may entertain of Catholicism, we cannot deny the depth of its teaching. It excels in catching souls, in capturing them betimes, and in keeping them for good. If it is profound in its theology and in its mysteries, it is not less so in the government of souls and in the simplicity of its instruction to the young. Children love it, the multitudes understand it, the learned admire it. It has an answer for all. No other moral force, in the course of ages, can be compared to it, no other has introduced so many ideas into the principles of that universal morality which is called the old-fashioned morality of our fathers." The Christian faith possesses the answer to the enigma. She is the lamp which the miner fastens to his forehead, and which allows him to see clearly in the dark galleries where he is obliged to toil. She upholds our poor little intelligence in its super-terrestrial flights, like a dove which an eagle has taken under its patronage, and to whom it shows the pathways through the skies above. It was because he was convinced that Christianity is the sun which enlightens everything here below that Mgr. Dupanloup said in 1872, before the Assemblée nationale—"Were we to retire into the desert, carrying away with us the Decalogue, the Gospel, and the Crucifix, you would stand astounded at your own darkness." According to M. Rénan, "Catholicism, like an enchanted circle, environs our entire life, and imparts so new a character to it, that the deprivation of it makes all things seem dull and joyless."

Outside revelation only pitfalls and quicksands are to be expected. No *via media* exists. One cannot on any logical ground be a Protestant, a Deist, or a Spiritualist distinct from all others. One must be either a true Christian or an Agnostic, an alternative indicated by the title of this book. One must in fact be a Christian. If divine things have any reality, then Catholicism is divine. If

Catholicism is not divine, then religion is no more than a pastime. "There is but one alleged revelation," says Mallock, "whose supernatural claims are still worthy of being examined by us: and that religion is the Christian;" after which he enters upon his proof in favour of Catholicity, under this heading in the margin—"The claims of the Roman Church are the only ones worth considering."[1]

Were there no Church existent in the civilised world, not a single man among those who reflect and think independently would believe in a God. Thus, in fatalism, the Moslem does not argue, neither do those who practise fetishism. It would be a crime for the Moslem to examine into his religion; the other believes in his gris-gris because he is told to believe in it. These men do not seriously discuss the object of their belief. It is not so with civilised men; accustomed to criticism, they ask themselves whether religion has any genuine foundation. If they succeed in convincing themselves that it has, they are, or will eventually become, Catholics. If they do not succeed in so doing, they join the ranks of those who can see nothing anywhere but varying phenomena, who rely upon no teacher, and sink to rest upon Montaigne's "soft pillow." Such persons are Agnostics. In the midst of the vast ocean of time, they maintain that there is nothing better to be done than to lie down, like Ulysses at the bottom of his little bark, allowing it to drift at the mercy of the waves, and peacefully awaiting the moment when the waters will close over it for ever. Were it not the wisest course, after having deprived Jesus of His Divinity and taken His cross from off our shoulders, to follow the bent of a philosophy which is indulgent to the passions, and to repeat unwearyingly the *Gaudeamus igitur* of Rénan? But, then, is such a state of soul possible?[2]

[1] See "Is Life Worth Living?" Chap. xi., p. 211.

[2] "The man who can give no account of his own existence is a fool; and he who denies a God can give no account of his existence. In the old time men whispered their folly within their own hearts; nowadays they proclaim it on the housetops. . . . There is a God—that is certain." (See "A Doubter's Doubts about Science and Religion," p. 23, by Robert Anderson, LL.D.) The author writes from an independent standpoint, as one who has convinced himself by dint of study, and become an intelligent student "unattached to any sect."

Whatever trouble it may cost, a man of sound understanding ought to see things as they are, and if he finds the Christian religion firmly established he should come back to the Church, for she is ever ready to receive the returning prodigal once more in her embrace. No act is binding on the conscience more than that of faith. To make this aright, it is not enough to say the thing is "probable," or "I think so," or "I presume it is so," but we must say, "I believe." I know why I believe; *scio cui credidi, et certus sum.* And when this goal is reached, then follows rest. Christianity does not admit of doubt. It is absolute in the strictest sense of the word, just because it is the truth in all its fulness. We believe that we have proved this. But we prefer leaving it to the sense of justice on the part of our readers to tell us that our line of argument is unanswerable, rather than assert it ourselves.

We have concluded the proof we proposed to give; and in justice to us, it should be granted that we have kept the promise we made at the beginning of this book, for we have come to close quarters with our adversaries, we have not overlooked any one of their objections, and we have always, and in every respect, observed the methods of honourable discussion. If we have presented each objection of unbelief in all its strength, it will be acknowledged that we have not left one of them without an answer. We would now, in our turn, propose the following questions for solution, and it appears to us that the unbeliever has no right to feel true peace of mind until he has answered them to his satisfaction. He will see, at least, that if certain objections exist against faith in God and in Jesus Christ, which disturb his mind, the objections which can be brought against atheism and rationalism are positively crushing and overwhelming.

It has not been proved, nor is there even a semblance of probability, that the world is its own cause; that by an incomprehensible evolution life proceeded from an unconscious atom, and became further developed into a complicated organism, into a being endowed with thought. Have any other than purely verbal explanations ever been

given of such a result as the formation of a basis for human intelligence, the traces of which in nature are so undeniable that our most obstinate opponents are forced to recognise it?[1] Has Determinism, or the doctrine that our will is inevitably ruled by the motives which actuate it, explained the origin, the universality, and the invincible constancy—(1) of that idea of liberty which it itself declares to be a contradiction; (2) of the unconquerable belief of mankind in what determinism calls a "chimera"; (3) of the unparalleled effects which that so-called chimera has produced in the world? Could the "real" existence of liberty produce more wonderful effects among certain men—the Stoic, for example, or the saint of the Christian Church—than this "chimera" of which the Deterministes speak? And what of the martyr? Is it the irresistible attraction of an invisible paradise which causes him to defy the most cruel torments? Has it been proved that immortality is an impossibility, or does materialism explain, even plausibly, the ineradicable and universal belief of mankind in a survival of the soul in another world? How is it that this

[1] That distinguished geologist and disciple of Darwin, Bernhard von Cotta, writes as follows in words which are worthy of serious attention:—"No inquirer into nature, however observant, can discern the original foundation of things or the great first cause. All we can do is to acquaint ourselves with the laws which regulate existence and, by means of investigation, enlarge the borders of our knowledge more and more, without, however, losing sight of them altogether. Beyond these boundaries lies the unattainable, by whatever name different people may call it; an inscrutable cause, a God, a creator, continues in the background of every research. Whether we consider man to have been created as he now is, or to have proceeded from an endless series of developments, the importance of the fact of his existence is in no way diminished, nor our difficulty in comprehending the origin of the world. (1) Some declare that the idea, the Spirit, God, was there, and created matter, and the actual world; (2) others think that He only created the matter, from which the world came into being; (3) or they assert that matter existed beforehand, and that the Spirit formed the world out of that; (4) and others, again, say matter developed itself according to inherent qualities, and thus, not only the world, but that, too, which we call Spirit, attained existence. Yet not one of these opinions solves the enigma of the origin of things."—"Geology and History," pp. 76, 77. In other words, natural science exceeds the limits of its sphere in attempting to invade the domain of another science, viz., supernatural science, from which it is distinct. Neither of these can be in contradiction to or out of harmony with the other, since both proceed from the same source of all truth, namely, God. Each science must move in its own sphere, so that neither can be impatient of the discoveries or definitions of the other. Conflict between natural and supernatural science is only possible when the one oversteps the legitimate boundaries by which it is separated from the other. The two are intended to run on parallel lines, like the wheels of a chariot, each being a support to the other, and bearing up, equally, the burden of truth.

belief should be neither less lively nor less powerful in the degraded savage than in the European, whose faith is more definite and enlightened? Is there a single individual—not excepting either Voltaire or Bayle—who has accounted for the existence of religion; who has shown us that there was a time when mankind was without religion? Has any one informed us who were its inventors, or how these inventors were able to dupe their fellow-creatures, or how they succeeded in imposing upon them the novel yoke of faith? Is it a genuine explanation of the origin of religious sentiment and of a definite religion to talk to us of the "grand imaginative instincts of humanity"; of that primitive unconscious humanity which poured out its dreams over the world of reality and imposed them upon mankind as so many religious creeds? What are many religions, if not a painful and, too often, I acknowledge, an unsuccessful, though sincere, effort of humanity to find God? If man is to be traced back to a merely animal origin, how are we to explain that he alone, of the whole animal creation, should experience at all times and in every clime the strange sentiment of morality and religion, those noblest titles to the dignity of his nature? Finally, is not spiritualism, or belief in the existence of the soul and of the world of spirits, the grandest account given of the world's history, and the doctrine which attributes the noblest of all aims to human life?

Has any philosopher interpreted Christ aright to us? Is not Christ, as described by Rénan, according to the confession of one of his friends, "very little coherent in his individuality"? Could He really be that ignorant, superstitious peasant, who looked out on the world with a very untrained eye; or is He, on the contrary, an idealist, who, before the time of Rénan, invented the doctrine of transcendental disdain; and, still more unlikely, could He have been some morose agitator, a species of anarchist, manifesting implacable hatred against the society of His time, who, instead of ending His life by the guillotine, ended it on the Cross? If the personality of Christ, far from being one of the most unique which humanity has ever seen, be only as "the phantom, a sort of ghost wandering about through tradition," to which Strauss has

undertaken to give form, how does it happen that Jesus Christ has stamped on humanity an impress which may still be felt after nineteen centuries? If there were neither originality nor spontaneity in Christ and in those about Him; if the new Law were but a plagiarism of the old, whence came that marvellous revolution which changed the face of the world? How is it that after the lapse of so long a period there are still men who either love or hate Christ, as no other living being has been loved or hated? How is it possible that the true Christ, the most original character in history, merely amused Himself by playing an assumed part which He shaped in keeping with the ancient prophecies?

Is it conceivable that an epidemic of folly or of knavery did actually spread over the whole primitive Church? Has unbelief provided any reasonable explanation of the credence which the first Christians gave to the Resurrection of Christ? Do hallucination, imposture, diseased organism, or the rarity of the atmosphere account for so firm and tenacious a belief? If Jesus was only an unlettered peasant, a dreamer, a philosopher puffed up with His own wild fancies, how did He manage to convince the rude peasantry of Galilee—first, that He was the Messias foretold by the prophets; next, that He was the Son of God; and, lastly, that He came to accomplish the redemption of the world, and to found upon earth a religion whose worship should be in spirit and in truth? How could the miracles of Jesus have been "placed by His contemporaries in the foremost rank," if He did not work any? Before seeing in Jesus one who taught with all authority, had not His contemporaries recognised in Him a wonder-worker? If Jesus, after He was risen, did not show Himself to His Apostles, could we doubt that, having seen their Master vanquished, put to death and buried by the Jewish and Roman authorities, the Apostles would look upon Him as an impostor? So that, if they themselves forged this pious tale, they could not have conceived they had any chance of persuading others to believe it. Still less could we imagine their taking it into their heads to preach the religion of a knave who had deluded them. Could they expect to be more fortunate than He was, and so escape the

hatred and the persecutions of the Sanhedrim, the miseries of prison, or, finally, the violent death which He had suffered? What reason had they to hope that they could found the religion of the Crucified One, and overturn the polytheism of Greece and Rome?

Then, on the other hand, a certitude so absolute, so sincere as is the certitude of the Christian, a certitude formed in spite of every opposition from both the intellectual and physical forces of the world, cannot be the outcome of knavery or illusion. How are we to suppose there was any disposition to visions and hallucinations among the peasants who, as the Gospel points out, were actually full of distrust? How suspect trickery among men who revealed themselves to us in their writings with so much simplicity and candour? Is, then, the age of Augustus one of myth? Did thirty years suffice to elaborate an entirely fabulous tradition? Is the eminently rational and dogmatic preface of Saint Luke's Gospel to be taken as the introduction to a collection of legends? And did there not exist at Alexandria a learned school well qualified to watch over and control the "diseased imaginations" attributed to the men of Jerusalem? Was not the Christian faith preached, at first, to suspicious and hostile audiences, and even to open enemies? Ought not, therefore, this undertaking to have inevitably failed, seeing that in it the greatest weakness entered into contest with all the powers of this world? In presence of so many jealous watchers was not an imposture sure to be unmasked, or an insane attempt at fraud certain of being brought to confusion?

The man who dreams that he has rendered due account of the origin of Christianity by such a jingle of words as "the fruitful originality of the spontaneous creations of human nature"; the grand imaginative instincts of humanity"—a sort of floating, airy elaboration of indescribable legendary ebullition; "the human faculties in the exercise of their creative fecundity"; "the hidden forces of the soul"; "that mighty delivery, that plastic energy, which, out of the meanest caterpillar, can evolve the fairy-like butterfly": has such a man the right to pride himself on the possession of superior intelligence, and

look down with disdainful compassion on the poor Christian mind?

St. Paul himself, who tells us with what fervour he lived according to the tradition of his fathers, what could have induced him to pass straight from the most enthusiastic pharisaism to the most ardent Christianity? Can it be imagined that a "sun-stroke" inspired so magnificent a Christology in this Jew, who was formerly so bitter an opponent? How is it possible that any derangement of his organisation could have changed him into a Christian, speaking in such accents of strong conviction, with so magnanimous a heart, so burning a charity,—a man who, alone, founded more Churches than all the other Apostles together; who bore testimony to his Master with such matchless eloquence in the presence of the Areopagus, before King Agrippa, and before the different synagogues? If he was mad, did his "madness" last all his life? And yet the witness of St. Paul was so living that it cast its light over the whole epoch which preceded it. If the synoptics are "an immediate echo of the reports of the first Christian generation," is it not evident that those narratives either reveal the inmost belief of those who were contemporary with Christ, and hence the supernatural cannot be pushed aside, or they are the deliberate production of impostors? Is there any room left for the "uncertain perception," the "innocent frauds," of which it pleases M. Rénan to speak in mincing words? Then, as regards St. John, would it not be better to follow the advice of M. Reuss, and before discussing the audacious and gratuitous suppositions of his detractors, to wait till they agree among themselves? Did any really weighty objections exist invalidating the authenticity of his writings, his adversaries would have been concordant in their attacks. Could a simple Jew, son of a race so "stiff-necked," narrow-minded, and exclusive, have conceived a religion which was to embrace the whole race of man; could he have devised a doctrine so unheard of before, so repugnant to the senses, a faith which, from its origin, has been justly called "the folly of the Cross"—*stultitiam crucis?* Is it possible that Jewish imagination should have found pleasure in

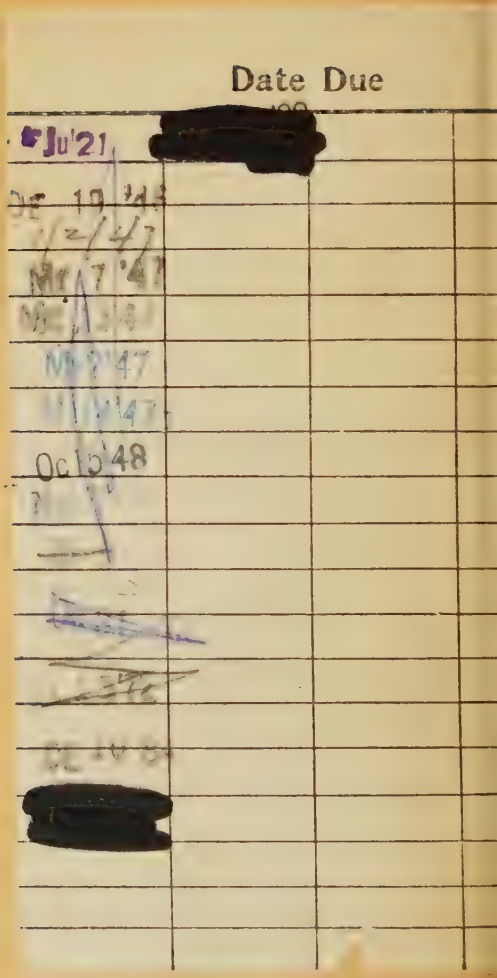
inventing a myth so strange, so contrary to Hebrew notions—the myth of a Messias born in a stable and dying upon a cross? In a word, is this marvellous history of the sojourn of the Son of God upon earth the romantic fabrication of a few Galilean boatmen, or rather, is not the very strangeness of this history the surest seal of its authenticity?

Christian apologists have now, for nineteen centuries, been, under one form or other, pressing infidelity to answer these questions. We would fain see an opponent of Christianity take them at last seriously in hand, and answer them in a clear, conclusive, and respectful manner. He would, by doing this, have far greater success in destroying the Christian religion than by raising specious objections to difficulties in biblical texts, or to the unfathomable mysteries which are the necessary stumbling-blocks of every philosophical and religious doctrine.

Reader, we have spoken from our heart to you at great length, because our object has been not only to bind you irrevocably to the Christian faith, but to make you its devoted apostles. Our endeavours have also been directed to the promotion of happiness and security in the families you are destined to found. If you are sceptics, your children will inherit your moral impotency. If, on the contrary, we succeed in making you Christians from conviction, we shall have indirectly founded a race of believers. In the present unsettled state of society, every Christian should be a missionary. If laymen, you will be more willingly listened to as messengers of that Christian faith which regenerated the old world, and which, at this day, even in the eyes of the better class of unbelievers, is the only safeguard of civilisation. You will be, in all things and in all places, the faithful witnesses, the indefatigable servants of the Gospel and of Jesus Christ. To convince and to persuade you was, therefore, a point of the utmost necessity. We cannot do better than conclude with the words of Saint Paul's behest to Timothy—"Labour as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." Happy will you be if, at your last hour, you can bear a like testimony to your work as did this great

conqueror of souls—"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the Faith. As to the rest, there is laid up for me a crown of justice, which the Lord, the just Judge, will render to me in that day; and not only to me, but to them also that love His coming" (2 Tim. iv. 7, 8). And happy indeed will it be for me, if I can add with all truth—"Among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life to my glory in the day of Christ, because I have not run in vain, nor laboured in vain" (Phil. ii. 15, 16). "Because now we live, if you stand in the Lord" (1 Thess. iii. 8).

PRINTED BY WILLIAM HODGE & CO.,
GLASGOW AND EDINBURGH.


Date Due
Jul'21
Oct 15'48

3 5282 00424 7717